

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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in first presidential debate

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Remember to
thank your
Command
for today's
copy of Stars
and Stripes.

News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

D.C.-area sniper case: A judge dismissed an indictment Friday against convicted sniper John Allen Muhammad, ruling that Virginia waited too long to try him for capital murder in the death of an FBI analyst who was shot in a store parking lot.

Muhammad, already convicted and sentenced to death for one of the sniper killings, was to have faced trial beginning in January in the analyst's death, one of 10 killings that terrorized the Washington area over three weeks in October 2002.

Prosecutors and defense attorneys disagreed on when Muhammad was arrested.

Peterson trial: Scott Peterson showed greater interest in the police search for his missing pregnant wife, Laci, than what jurors in his murder trial were originally told, according to the lead detective on the case.

Modesto police Detective Craig Grogan conceded Thursday that his testimony earlier in the week may have misrepresented how often Scott Peterson had contacted authorities about his wife's disappearance.

During cross-examination Thursday by Peterson's lawyer Mark Geragos, the detective acknowledged that Peterson made many more inquiries. Grogan said the monthly contact was between Peterson and himself, and did not include conversations the former fertilizer salesman had with other officers.

Gun maker lawsuit: The country's largest firearms firm is not liable for the shooting of two police officers by a felon, a judge ruled.

Former Orange, N.J., police officers Dave Lemongello and Kenneth McGuire are not entitled to damages from Southport, Conn.-based Sturm, Ruger & Co., Inc., Kanawha County Circuit Judge Irene Berger ruled Thursday.

The officers sued the gun maker and a South Charleston pawnshop two years ago, arguing they should pay damages because a Ruger handgun sold at the shop had been used to shoot them in January 2001.

Berger said it would require "a real stretch" to make the gun maker responsible because the gun had originally been sold to an Ohio wholesaler.

EPA smog report: Few of the cities most prone to smog now meet federal standards or have shown progress over the past decade in reducing the pollutants that cause it, the Environmental Protection Agency's internal watchdog says.

Those few improvements "may be more related to changes in weather patterns than emission reductions," says the report released Thursday by the agency's inspector general.

It was issued just a week after EPA Administrator Mike Leavitt said the nation's air quality is improving. "The air is the cleanest it's been in three decades but we're not done yet, obviously," he then told reporters.

'Three-strikes' law: Florida's "three-strikes" law mandating longer prison sentences for repeat felons was upheld Thursday in a 4-3 ruling by the state's Supreme Court in Tallahassee.

Florida's five midlevel appeals courts had been odds over the constitutionality of the 1999 law. Two had concluded the Legislature violated the state constitutional require-



Riots in Haiti: Haitians scream and push for water handed out by the U.N. peacekeepers at the CARE food warehouse in Gonaïves, Haiti, on Thursday. Rioters shot into the air and smashed windows of cars blocked by flaming tire barricades in a Port-au-Prince suburb on Friday, the day after shootouts during a march to demand the return of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide killed at least three police officers.

ment that bills deal with only one subject when it passed the law; three ruled there was no problem with the law's scope.

Fla. right-to-die case: Attorneys for the parents of a woman at the center of a right-to-die case argued Thursday she would have been profoundly affected by new Catholic teachings on end-of-life issues.

"Our case is pretty simple: I say the pope would have changed her mind," said David Gibbs, the new lead attorney for the parents of severely brain-damaged Terri Schiavo.

In March, Pope John Paul II said a person in a persistent vegetative state still has the right to basic health care — including nutrition and hydration — and to withhold it would be a sin.

Genesis recovery: Three weeks after the Genesis space capsule slammed into the Utah desert after its parachutes failed to deploy, NASA scientists remain hopeful they can salvage the mission and reveal clues about the origin of the solar system.

The scientists are nearly finished picking apart the capsule's mangled inner canister, which housed disks of exotic materials used for 2½ years to capture solar atoms outside the Earth's magnetic shield.

Business

Fannie Mae investigation: Fannie Mae, the giant mortgage company that has been accused of earnings manipulation by regulators, now also has become the subject of a criminal investigation by the Justice Department.

An accounting crisis is swirling at the company, which is the biggest financier of home mortgages in the country, and scrutiny of it is widening across the government.

A federal agency that oversees Fannie Mae and its government-sponsored sibling, Freddie Mac, cited serious accounting problems after eight months of investigating. And the Securities and Exchange Commission is conducting a preliminary inquiry

into Fannie Mae's accounting.

World

EU referendum: President Jacques Chirac said Friday that France will decide in a referendum whether it wants Turkey to join the European Union — a potential blow to the Muslim-majority country's bid.

Chirac said he has asked the government to prepare a constitutional amendment that would require a referendum to be held whenever the EU wants to take in a new member.

The French people "will have their say," Chirac said at a news conference alongside German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder.

North Korea talks: — The United States and South Korea expressed confidence that six-nation talks aimed at convincing North Korea to give up its nuclear program would succeed, despite missing a September target for holding a new round of meetings.

Secretary of State Colin Powell and his Chinese counterpart, Li Zhaoxing, said diplomacy should concentrate on bringing the isolate North back to the negotiating table.

Sudan troops: U.N. mission officials in Sudan said Friday that they hope for an expanded African force to be on the ground in Darfur by the end of October, after Sudan's foreign agreed to allow in 3,500 Sudanese troops.

International leaders will first have to resolve logistics problems and supply shortages that have idled many of the 376-member African Union monitoring force already here. U.N. spokesman Radhia Achouri said.

U.N. officials hope to get a beefed-up force in "as near future as possible" for Darfur, where turmoil continues in a 20-month-old conflict that has killed more than 50,000 people and driven 1.4 million of Sudan's non-Arab villagers from their homes.

Stories and photo from wire services

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Clarification

A story in Friday's paper about battlefield commanders in Iraq taking questions and advice from politicians in Washington was inaccurate. During his presentation at the Land Combat Expo, V Corps commander Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez did not speak directly about interference from political leaders. Additionally, Stars and Stripes had been working through V Corps for an interview with Sanchez prior to the expo. Stars and Stripes, however, did not request an interview with Sanchez at the expo. Before Sanchez's presentation, U.S. Army Europe public affairs officials and Stars and Stripes agreed that Sanchez would not be interviewed afterward.

Comics,
horoscopes
and advice
every day in
Stars and Stripes

U.S., Iraqi forces launch major offensive

One U.S. soldier dead; more than 100 insurgents killed in Samarra

By ZIDAN KHALAF
The Associated Press

SAMARRA, Iraq — U.S. and Iraqi forces battled their way into the heart of one of Iraq's key insurgent strongholds Friday in the first of a series of promised major offensives to regain control of areas lost to the rebels. More than 100 insurgents were killed and 37 captured in the fighting, an Iraqi minister said.

Backed by warplanes and tanks, some 5,000 troops swept in to seize the city hall, the main mosque and other key sites, leaving only pockets of rebel resistance after more than 12 hours of combat, according to the U.S. military and Iraqi authorities.

The attack against Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, appeared to trumpet the launch of major military operations to wrest other areas of the country from insurgents ahead of general elections in January. It is feared that inability to stage balloting in cities such as Samarra would severely mar, or even invalidate, election results.

Also Friday, U.S. warplanes and tanks attacked the vast Baghdad slum of Sadr City, killing 12 Iraqis and wounding 11 others, a hospital director said. The military said only one armed rebel was killed.

"We will spare no effort to clean all the Iraqi lands and cities from these criminals and we will pave the way through these operations not only for the reconstruction but also for the general elections," Qasim Dowoud, minister of state for national security, told a news conference.

Dr. Khalid Ahmed said at least 80 bodies and more than 100 wounded were brought to Samarra General Hospital, but it was not immediately clear how many were insurgents. The hospital was running out of supplies, Ahmed said.

Dowoud said more than 100 insurgents were killed in the fighting and 37 others captured, including members of the fallen Saddam Hussein regime. No foreign Arab fighters were taken captive, he said.

One American soldier was killed and four were wounded, while an AH-64 Cobra helicopter was hit by small arms fire but was able to land safely at a coalition base near Samarra, the U.S. military said.

The operation involved about 3,000 soldiers of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division along with 2,000 members of the Iraqi army and Iraqi National Guard.

"We are working on the complete clean-up of the city from all those terrorists," Dowoud said, describing Samarra as an "outlaw city" that had spun out of control.

Smoke rose from an area around the Imam Ali al-Hadi and Imam Hassan al-Askari shrine, raising fears about one of the holiest sites for Shiite Muslims. But the shrine was not damaged and an Iraqi commando unit took the mosque, capturing 25 armed insurgents, said Maj. Neal O'Brien, a spokesman for the 1st Infantry Division.

"Coalition forces and Iraqi security forces will do everything possible to protect the valuable site from damage," he said.

The situation in Samarra, a city of 250,000 people, appeared calm late Friday except for American snipers on rooftops firing at anybody appearing in the streets below.

Some residents of the city had fled before the attack, but most stayed behind amid news of intense negotiations to solve the crisis peacefully.

The result could be a deal after midnight. Residents covered their homes as tanks and warplanes pounded the city. Loud explosions and the crackle of automatic gunfire continued sporadically into the afternoon. Houses were flattened and cars crushed.

"We are terrified by the violent approach used by the Americans to subdue the city," said Mahmoud Saleh, a 33-year-old civil servant. "I hope that the fighting ends as soon as possible."

U.S. and Iraqi forces blocked the roads into the city to prevent insurgents moving in and out, O'Brien said.

As Iraqi forces secured the Samarra bridge, American soldiers saw insurgents in speedboats looting ordnance on the banks of the Tigris River, the military said. Soldiers fired warning shots and the insurgents returned fire, prompting U.S. forces to destroy the boats, killing their occupants, a statement said.

Water and electricity services were cut off, and troops ordered residents to stay off the streets as they moved from house to house in search of insurgents.

A 7 p.m.-to-7 a.m. curfew was announced. The offensive came in response to "Repeated and unprovoked attacks by anti-Iraqi forces" against Iraqi and coalition forces, the military said. Its aim was to "facilitate orderly government processes, kill or capture anti-Iraqi forces and set the conditions to proceed with infrastructure and quality of life improvements."

"Unimpeded access throughout the city for Iraqi security forces and multinational forces is non-negotiable," a statement said.

Samarra had been a "no go" zone for the American forces since May. U.S. forces returned briefly on Sept. 9 under a peace deal brokered by tribal leaders under which U.S. forces agreed to provide millions of dollars in reconstruction funds in exchange for an end to attacks on American and Iraqi troops. But clashes quickly resumed.

Offering a road map to a coming offensive, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell last week said the

military will likely take the Sunni Triangle cities of Ramadi and Samarra before attempting to restore order in nearby Fallujah, which he called "the tough one."

Also on the "hit list" of U.S. military commanders is the Baghdad slum of Sadr City, scene of almost daily clashes and U.S. airstrikes against armed followers of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

The head of Sadr General Hospital, Abdel-Jabar Solag, said the wounded Friday were brought to the medical facility after the attack. The U.S. military maintains casualties are often exaggerated by Iraqi hospital sources.

While Sadr City remains a bastion of Iraq's majority Shiite Muslims, Ramadi, Samarra and Fallujah form part of the Sunni heartland, where resistance to the U.S.-backed government has been the fiercest. Exclusion of this violent zone from the January ballot could raise questions about its legitimacy.

The U.S. military believes many suicide bomb attacks and kidnappings are launched from the triangle, especially out of Fallujah, which has seen weeks of "precision strikes" aimed at followers of Jordanian terror mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

During the Samarra push, soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division rescued a kidnapped Turkish construction worker who was being held in the city. He was identified as Yuhani Kaya, an employee of the 77 Construction Company in Samarra.

Later, an unofficial French negotiator told a radio station that two journalists who have been held hostage in Iraq for more than a month could be released within hours. Philippe Brett told Europe-1 radio that he was with the two French hostages and that negotiations were being finalized for their release.

Christian Chesnot, 37, and George Malbrun, 41, disappeared Aug. 20 with their Syrian driver while apparently heading toward Najaf. Militants calling themselves the Islamic Army in Iraq claimed responsibility, demanding that France revoke a law banning Islamic head scarves from state schools.

Brett is not an official negotiator for the French government.

He has worked in Iraq for years, mainly through the French Office for Development of Industry and Culture, which he helped found.

In the southern city of Kufa, meanwhile, security forces prevented hundreds of Shiite Muslim supporters of al-Sadr from entering a major mosque for Friday prayers. The first such action since Saddam's fall last year. Police fired in the air to disperse the faithful, but there were no reported casualties.



An unidentified man curses U.S. forces after parts of her home were damaged in an airstrike in Sadr City, Iraq, on Friday. Hospital sources said 12 people died overnight in U.S. airstrikes.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday, 1,052 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to the Defense Department. Of those, 798 died as a result of hostile action and 254 died of nonhostile causes. The figures include three military civilians.

The British military has reported 67 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, six; Ukraine, eight; Slovakia, three; Thailand, two; the Netherlands, two; and Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 914 U.S. military members have died — 689 as a result of hostile action and 225 of non-hostile causes, according to the military's numbers as of Thursday.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A soldier was killed by a car bomb in Baghdad, Iraq.

■ A soldier was killed by a rocket attack in Baghdad, Iraq.

The latest identification reported by the Department of Defense:

■ Army Sgt. Tyler D. Prewitt, 22, Phoenix; died Tuesday in Landstuhl, Germany, from injuries received in Baqubah, Iraq, on Sept. 24 when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his vehicle; assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Vilseck, Germany.

■ Army Pfc. Joshua K. Titcomb, 20, Somerset, Ky.; died Wednesday in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, of injuries received Tuesday when an explosive detonated near his military vehicle; assigned to 2nd Battalion, 72nd Armor Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Casey, Korea.

New tape allegedly by al-Qaida deputy aired

Arab station says speaker on recording urges violence against U.S., British interests

BY TAREK AL-ISSAWI

The Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — An audio tape purportedly released by Osama bin Laden's deputy calls for attacks on U.S. and British interests everywhere, according to a broadcast Friday by Al-Jazeera television.

The Arab station said the speaker on the tape was Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian-born surgeon and the closest aide to the al-Qaida terrorist group leader. The U.S. government has offered up to \$25 million for information leading to his killing or capture. It was not immediately possible to verify the authenticity of the recording or determine when it was taped. In Washington, a U.S. official said the CIA was aware of the tape and was looking at it.

The tape emerged one day after a campaign debate between President Bush and Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., discussed the U.S. war on terror and the search for bin Laden.

The voice sounded like past recordings of al-Zawahiri, but it also made an unusual reference to the possibility that al-Qaida's top leaders were not invincible.

"You, youth of Islam, this is our message," he said. "If we die or are detained, continue the path after us, and don't betray God and his prophet, and don't knowingly

Musharraf: About 100 terrorists killed in attack

BY MUNIR AHMAD

The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Pakistani security forces killed about 100 al-Qaida terrorists during a recent military operation in tribal areas near Afghanistan, state-run TV on Friday quoted Pakistan's president as saying.

President Gen. Pervez Musharraf also said the operation in the rugged South Waziristan tribal region was "purely against al-Qaida."

"During this operation, about 100 al-Qaida terrorists were killed," Pakistan Television quoted Musharraf as saying about a plane on the way back from visits to the United States, the Netherlands and Italy.

His comments came hours before Pakistani intelligence agents raided a home near the northwestern city of Peshawar on Thursday and arrested a Libyan with suspected al-Qaida

links.

Authorities say the man identified himself as Ahmed Abdullah during interrogation. Pakistan, a key ally of the United States in its war on terror, has deployed about 70,000 troops in its tense tribal regions in an effort to flush out terror suspects, who often target security forces.

Meanwhile, a land mine planted on a road killed three children and wounded two more Friday on the outskirts of Wana, the main town in South Waziristan.

Maj. Gen. Shaukat Sultan said the children had been walking to school when one of them picked up the explosive device "planted by miscreants for sabotage purpose." The children's ages were not immediately known.

Shortly after the incident, Pakistani troops killed a suspected foreigner and captured another man, also a foreigner, after a shootout in the same area where the children were killed, Sultan said.

He said local residents helped them to track down the pair, who were suspected of trying to plant a land mine on a road to target Pakistani forces.

Officials said this week that their security agencies had "broken the back" of al-Qaida's network in the country by killing a key Pakistani operative, Amjad Hussain Farooqi, during a week-end raid in the country's south.

Farooqi was believed to be behind the kidnapping and beheading in 2002 of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, and two failed assassination attempts on Musharraf that left 17 other people dead in December 2003.

Musharraf returned Thursday night after a two-week trip to the three countries. He met with President Bush, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and other world leaders on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

betray the trust."

The speaker's words came more quickly and energetically, sounding generally more upbeat than previous tapes believed to be from al-Zawahiri.

In addition to the United States

and Britain, the speaker singled out Australia, France, Poland, Norway, South Korea and Japan, saying their "interests ... are spread everywhere."

"We must not wait more ... or we will be devoured one country

after the other," the speaker said. "The youth must not wait for anyone and must begin resisting from now, and take experience and lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan and Chechnya."

He also said the countries cited

had given Israel the "means of survival."

The speaker also called for "learned and experience people" to organize what he called "a leadership for the resistance to stand up to the crusader campaign like the holy warriors organized their affairs in Afghanistan, Chechnya or Palestine."

In references apparently to the Russian government, Israel, Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority and the U.S.-backed Afghan government, the speaker continued to say the holy warriors had organized "despite the will of the occupier and that of the traitor national government."

An Al-Jazeera producer said the tape was "supposedly received today," by usual means, which he refused to discuss. The station showed almost four minutes in two clips of a longer recording, and, as usual, was not planning to broadcast the tape in full.

The last message purportedly from al-Zawahiri surfaced last month just before the third anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States. In that videotape, a bearded al-Zawahiri proclaimed the United States will be defeated in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The CIA determined with a high degree of confidence that the speaker in the earlier message was al-Zawahiri.

NATO finishes expansion of Afghan forces

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — NATO on Friday announced the completion of the planned expansion of its Afghan peacekeeping force out of the capital into five northern provinces.

Alliance Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said allied troops had begun operating in the city of Pul-i-Khumri, Baghlan province, to complete the first phase of NATO's expansion out of Kabul.

NATO currently has around 9,000 peacekeepers in Afghanistan, including around 2,000 temporary reinforcements deployed for the Oct. 9 presidential elections.

The alliance began a peacekeeping mission limited to the Kabul area in August 2003. It began to expand in the north in January when German troops deployed to the city of Kun-duz, but further expansion plans were long hampered by the reluctance of nations to commit troops.

The delays provoked criticism from aid agencies and human rights groups that the alliance was not doing enough to help bolster stability. Allied leaders responded more quickly after a personal appeal from President Hamid Karzai at a June summit in Istanbul, Turkey, although NATO's critics say the reinforcements still fall short of what is needed.

Alliance peacekeeping teams are now in Mazar-e-Sharif, Fozairabad, Baghlan, Maimana and Kunduz as well as Kabul.

NATO planners are working on sending more teams to western provinces, but have



An Afghan woman wearing a burqa passes as a Danish soldier from International Security Forces keeps guard in the center of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Friday.

given no indication when they will deploy saying the main focus was now on the election.

The alliance peacekeepers operate separately from the 18,000 strong U.S.-led combat force that focuses on tracking down remnants of al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Additional NATO units providing security for the election include over 1,000 Spanish and Italian soldiers in Mazar-e-Sharif and

Kabul, a quick reaction force of 110 U.S. infantry, six Dutch F-16 fighter planes stationed over the border in Kyrgyzstan and four Cougar helicopters from Spain.

A battalion of the U.S. 63rd Armor Regiment comprising about 560 troops is on standby in Vilseck, Germany, to intervene rapidly in case of an "over the horizon" force for NATO in case of trouble during the elections.

Lawyer 'intimidation'

NEWARK, N.J. — The attorney for a soldier charged in the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal said Thursday the government is trying to intimidate defense lawyers and witnesses by making them sign an agreement that they will not sue if they are injured or killed when they travel to Iraq.

"It's essentially trying to influence us not to appear on behalf of our clients in Baghdad," said Paul W. Bergerin, lawyer for Sgt. Javai S. Davis.

In a letter Bergerin said he received Wednesday, Army lawyer Maj. Michael R. Holley stated: "You will be traveling into a combat zone in a dangerous part of the world."

"Before allowing you to enter Iraq, you must agree to hold the United States harmless, assume the risks set forth above, and affirmatively waive your right to sue the Army or any other governmental agency for injury or death," the letter stated.

Bergrin said the issue surfaced while travel arrangements were being made for an Oct. 20 pretrial hearing in Baghdad, where he plans to argue Davis' court-martial should be held in the United States.

A military spokesman in Baghdad, Army Lt. Col. Steven A. Boylan, said such agreements "are not uncommon at all. In fact, they are quite common."

From The Associated Press

Benefits still coming for injured Iraqi worker

BY T. CHRISTIAN MILLER
Los Angeles Times

BAGHDAD — They called him Homeboy.

He is an Iraqi who was hired by U.S. defense contractor Titan Corp. as an interpreter for soldiers with the 82nd Airborne Division. He talked for them, prayed for them and even fought for them.

But a year after his leg was blown off during a skirmish, Hayder Kharalla hops around his house in Baghdad, unable to walk more than a few hundred yards or carry his young son.

Kharalla still believes in the America that said it wanted to free his country. But he doesn't understand why Titan, one of the U.S. government's biggest contractors, has failed to deliver on its promise to provide a prosthetic leg or rehabilitation therapy to help him walk again. "I feel inside a little sorry for myself," said Kharalla, 30, who was being paid \$10 a day by the company. "I worked so much. And this hurts me so much."

With perhaps as many as 150,000 people — U.S. citizens, Iraqis and other foreign nationals — employed under reconstruction programs, U.S. officials and contracting experts increasingly worry that companies are not providing required health benefits and insurance.

There have been at least 134 reported deaths and 858 reports of injuries involving workers from the United States and other countries

since the U.S.-led invasion in March 2003, according to government figures. By comparison, more than 1,030 U.S. military personnel have been killed and more than 7,000 wounded.

Experts say the contractor statistics may fall short of reality, and there is growing concern that some companies may be unaware of their responsibilities, especially in regard to Iraqi workers. The Labor Department, which monitors compliance, has had a number of meetings with companies and insurance providers to determine how best to increase awareness of the relevant law, the Defense Base Act.

Iraq's chaotic situation has stymied efforts to improve matters. The country has no banking system able to process insurance payments, no legal system to enforce compliance and no tradition of litigation to file complaints.

Also, the Labor Department has no personnel in Iraq. "There are problematic issues coming up that you don't normally see," a department official said.

One U.S. Army Reserve judge advocate who has dealt with such cases criticized the department for not doing more for injured workers in Iraq.

"Most executive branches have offices at the U.S. Embassy. Why not the Department of Labor?" the judge advocate said. "It's possible to have more outreach."

Titan declined to give an official statement, citing privacy con-

cerns. One spokesman said the company was trying to help Kharalla and other injured translators obtain treatment outside Iraq. Titan has given Kharalla a raise and continues paying his salary, now \$600 a month.

"Our insurance company and Titan personnel have been coordinating the movement of this action, but due to the lack of a stable Iraqi government structure, we have not been able to obtain the required travel requirements and logistics yet needed to make this ongoing effort possible," the spokesman said.

Kharalla watched the bombing of Baghdad at the start of the war with fear and relief. The repressive regime that once threatened to kill his father, a government lawyer, was on its way out. He had high hopes for a new, free Iraq.

When U.S. troops came knocking a few days later in a search for unexploded bombs, Kharalla impressed them with his English, acquired during a childhood spent in England. They offered him a job as an interpreter.

Kharalla became a voice for the troops. He explained U.S. intentions to rebuild Iraq at neighborhood meetings. He calmed angry crowds of people who swarmed troops. He was at front doors during raids, asking permission to enter.

U.S. troops became a window into a life he had seen only on television. They talked to him about freedom. They played rap music while driving around Baghdad in



SAAD KHARALLA/Los Angeles Times

Hayder Kharalla, 30, stands next to his son at his Baghdad home. His employer, Titan Corp., has yet to deliver promised benefits.

Humvees. They gave him his nickname, Homeboy.

"It was a dream, honestly," Kharalla said. "I loved the people I worked with. I became exactly like them."

On Aug. 6, 2003, Kharalla was with a platoon conducting a patrol to enforce a curfew in south Baghdad. It was after midnight when they stopped to talk with a man in the road. Kharalla had just begun asking questions when the first shot rang out.

Kharalla ducked down, lying against the wheel of an SUV. He barely felt the bullet that severed his right leg. Another bullet punctured his left calf.

Around him, the firefight raged. A sergeant fell next to him.

Kharalla reached out to pull him to safety behind the patrol vehicle, but the man was dead.

Another soldier threw Kharalla over his shoulder and staggered backward firing his rifle. Kharalla wound up in a Humvee, headed for a field hospital. Two soldiers were killed and 16 people were wounded in the incident.

After doctors put a cast on the leg to prepare for amputation, Kharalla asked one physician to inscribe a message on it.

"It was my honor to work with the Americans. I want to dedicate this leg to all the Americans who died to make Iraq free," he had the doctor write.

U.S. military hospital services in Iraq do not include treatment for amputees. Soldiers with such problems are normally taken to Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, but as a private contractor, Kharalla was not eligible.

Titan's main problem was getting Kharalla out of Iraq for treatment. No commercial flights were flying. Kharalla had no passport. He had to obtain a visa to enter other countries, but there were few functioning embassies in Baghdad.

As the months progressed, Kharalla's case passed from one company official to another as Titan rotated personnel through Iraq. Several times, company officials called Kharalla to tell him his paperwork had been lost. Kharalla said he had sent more than 20 photos and three complete sets of medical records to Titan, which was working with AIG, its insurance carrier, to help Kharalla.

The airborne soldiers mounted their own effort to shed the bureaucracy, contacting higher-ups to win permission for Kharalla to leave.

It is unclear why Titan had such trouble. Several companies and nongovernmental groups have transported wounded employees abroad for rehabilitation therapy.

Kharalla and the soldiers said they asked repeatedly for treatment in the United States. Each time, they said, Titan told them they could transport Kharalla only to the closest possible country with adequate facilities for an amputee, such as Qatar or Germany.

A Titan official said Kharalla could not be sent to the United States because his case was not considered life-threatening.

An injured worker has the right to appeal to the Labor Department for a review of the treatment provided by a company's insurance carrier. But Kharalla said he never received a letter the department sent him in care of Titan that explained the process.

Kharalla is still hopeful that he will receive treatment. A Titan representative told him in an e-mail that Titan's insurance carrier needed still more paperwork.

"I'm sorry this has taken so long," the e-mail said.

As of last week, Kharalla was still waiting.

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20315-0000

2004 VOTING MESSAGE

In this election year, you — our men and women in uniform — are stationed around the globe serving our Nation and defending democracy. We have both the responsibility and the privilege to participate in our democracy by exercising our fundamental right to vote. I encourage every eligible man and woman in uniform, as well as all family members of voting age, to join in the democratic process and cast your ballots. You will have the opportunity to vote, either in person or through absentee ballots, in primary, special run-off and general elections, no matter where you are stationed or what operation you are participating in. Recent elections have demonstrated the importance of every absentee ballot. Your vote does count.

The 2004 elections will determine our choice for president and vice-president, 34 senators, the entire House of Representatives, and 13 governors, as well as thousands of local officials. I urge each of you to participate, starting with the primaries already underway and continuing through the general election on November 2nd.

Most of you will be using the absentee voting process, which has never been easier than it is today. For those of us in the Armed Forces and our family members, starting the process is as easy as filling out and mailing the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). The FPCA is available from your Unit Voting Assistance Officer, who can also assist you with your state procedures.

As members of the Armed Forces, we each have a responsibility to take part in determining our Nation's leadership.

IT'S YOUR FUTURE. VOTE FOR IT!

Robert M. Gates
Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

General: Communication was a challenge in Iraq

Commanders cite difficulties in getting message through to all allies during war

BY CHARLIE COON
Stars and Stripes

HEIDELBERG, Germany — The U.S.-led military coalition in Iraq defeated Saddam Hussein's conventional forces in spring 2003.

But the military leaders' ability to engage in communication needed to win the peace left a lot of room for improvement, according to the coalition's former military commander.

"Strategic communication was a challenge for us from the very beginning, and we struggled with it through the entire time I was there," Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez said Thursday during the final day of Land Combat Expo 2004.

Sanchez, who as commander of Combined Joint Task Force-7 directed the multinational force, said that anyone with a stake in Operation Iraqi Freedom needed to be kept up to speed, and that did not always happen.

"It literally was the world [as an audience]," Sanchez said.

"You've got a combined operation of 36 countries. If you've got a few political problems or a few strategic problems, you've got to communicate with that entire world that is going on in [Iraq]," he said.

"You've got to communicate with each one of the national audiences, not just your own."

Sanchez was one of a number of top generals at the expo who talked about their experiences.

Gen. William S. Wallace, former commander of V Corps,

which spearheaded the defeat of Saddam's army and evicted his regime from Baghdad, said Wednesday that he wished the coalition had more quickly recognized the shift in power from Saddam's regime to the Iraqi people.

The coalition, if it might have done a better job co-opting more Iraqis sooner into playing a role in the reconstruction of their country.

Sanchez, the current V Corps commander, called his comments "observations" rather than "lessons learned," saying that time was needed for the U.S. military to fully evaluate what it had learned.

The nations that made up the coalition made military contributions ranging from one person to several thousand troops, he said.

But no matter how small the contribution, each nation's people needed to be located.

Inside of Iraq, there was an array of audiences, from individual U.S. troops to whole regions of the country, experiencing different levels of satisfaction and anxiety.

"You have to break that [message] down, you have to communicate in the theater of operations that you're in," Sanchez said.

"You have to communicate effectively to the region and to the country and then to the individual Iraqi who is out there."

"You have to be able to tell him what lies ahead in his future and what you are doing for him, and what he can help."

"Then you have to communicate with your own force so your soldiers understand where we're



Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez

headed and how we're doing," Sanchez said.

"It's critical to succeed." Sanchez called dealing with reporters and other media a "necessary evil."

Sometimes they could be your friend, Sanchez said, and sometimes your foe. He called it the "CNN factor." But giving interviews was a commander's job, from top brass down to junior lieutenants, Sanchez said.

"You have to embrace [the media]," he said.

"You have to be good at it, have to understand the messages you want to communicate, and understand the dangers of getting out of your lane."

"Because it can have an impact very, very rapidly all the way up to the national level, and I had to struggle with that at times."

E-mail: Charlie Coon at: coonc@mail.strips.mil

Man covers car with war dead's names

The Associated Press

DENTON, Texas — Row upon row, letter after letter, more than 1,000 names blanket the champagne-colored four-door car.

Ernesto M. Blanco, 28, San Antonio. James Michael Goins, 23, Bonner Springs, Kansas. Alan J. Hagerman, 35, Hagerman, Idaho.

Covered in writing from black, blue, green and pink markers, Mike Sutton's 1996 Mitsubishi Diamante is a rolling tribute to U.S. soldiers who have died in Iraq.

"I think these guys should be honored, and we're not doing that," said Sutton, 50, an opponent of the war. "I wanted to show everyone that these are people dying. And it's more to say 'because this is my son'."

Sutton — who owns a store selling incense, jewelry and home decor items in this college town just north of Dallas — doesn't consider himself a political activist. He said he had never been involved in political causes until March, when he attended a protest in Crawford near President Bush's ranch on the war's one-year anniversary.

Sutton said he was concerned people were growing callous about casualties, and he wanted to im-

tate the Vietnam Veterans Memorial listing names of slain soldiers.

"The whole car was covered with [anti-war] bumper stickers, but I didn't think it was a message anybody would read, so I wanted something to catch their eye," said Sutton, a registered Democrat.

In April, Sutton got out the rain-resistant markers. Finding lists on the Internet, Sutton started writing dead soldiers' names in 5-inch-high letters. As the weeks passed, he erased some quotes he had written and removed bumper stickers to make room for more names. In May, he was nearly out of space and decided to start over.

After going through a car wash, Sutton drove home, sat on pillows in his garage and began writing in 1-inch-high letters the names, ages and hometowns of every U.S. and coalition soldier and Iraqi civilian who died.

"My adrenaline got going, but after 17 hours my legs hurt like heck the next day," he said.

But he's running out of room again. Some space remains on the hood, but after that, he may have to use a friend's van.

"Most people say the car's not big enough," Sutton said. "I hope it is. I pray it is."

MILITARY UPDATE

Tom Philpott

Congress ends quirky tax break

Combat-zone exemptions that hurt military families eliminated by bill

Congress has passed legislation to end a quirky reduction in tax breaks that hits lower-income military families when their servicemembers are assigned to Iraq, Afghanistan or other combat areas.

Relief from the tax break which was part of the Working Families Tax Relief Act of 2004, approved Sept. 23 and sent to the White House. It applies only to tax years 2004 and 2005, but it might be extended.

Last year, up to 10,000 servicemembers saw combat-zone tax exemptions lower their family income, for some by thousands of dollars. The combat-zone exemptions did so by lowering reportable income enough that families lost eligibility for the more valuable Earned Income Tax Credit.

Victims of this tax break "disproportionately affect low-income families," said a Defense official called it, typically are lower-grade enlisted members or junior officers who are married with children, serve at least seven months in a combat zone, and have no other family income.

What they lose is the EITC, a refundable credit for low-income workers approved in 1975 to offset the burden of Social Security taxes and to provide an incentive to work. Income thresholds to qualify for EITC vary by family size. For example, if workers have one qualifying child, taxable income must fall below \$30,338 (or \$31,338 filing jointly). But they also must have some taxable income.

EITC eligibility can mean refundable tax credits which put extra cash in pockets. The maximum credit in 2003 was \$4,204 for a worker with two or more children, \$2,547 with one child and \$382 for a childless taxpayer. It's a more valuable tax benefit than combat tax exclusion for lower income families who pay little or no taxes any way. In combat areas, enlisted and warrant officer earnings are, too, but only the first \$6,315.90 each month in 2004.

Sens. Mark Pryor, D-Ark., and Montana's Max Baucus, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, co-sponsored the original bill to protect EITC eligibility. Now part of the new tax law, it will allow members, if they choose, to have combat-zone income count toward EITC eligibility.

Choice, here, is important because not all members lose valuable tax breaks. Some senior enlisted members and even senior officers gain income from the way combat-zone exemptions and the EITC interact. Tax-break windfalls occur if they serve only part of a year in a combat zone, leaving just enough taxable income to qualify for EITC.

Financial protection

The House Financial Services Committee unanimously approved Sept. 29 and sent for floor vote the Military Personnel Financial Services Protection Act (HR 5011), a bill introduced by Rep. Max Baucus, R-Ga., to end the sale of high-priced securities and life insurance products to service people.

Specifically banned would be "contractual plan mutual funds" like the Systematic Investment Plan sold to more than 300,000 military personnel by First Commercial Financial Planning, Inc., of Fort Worth, Texas. These investments "disappeared" from the civilian market 20 years ago.

Burns said, "pawed off on unsuspecting young service people as part of 'approved' savings and insurance plans."

Sales commissions the first year are 50 percent of the amount invested. Most mutual fund investments have fees of 6 percent or less.

In July, The New York Times published a series of articles detailing abuses of military personnel by investment companies and insurers. The reporting, and on-going investigations by federal and state agencies, led to a September hearing of a House Financial Services subcommittee.

While the Burns bill would end the sale of contractual plan mutual funds, it would not invalidate existing plans.

HR 5011 also would mandate that state insurance laws be enforced on military property, eliminating a haven for unscrupulous agents to sell overpriced insurance products as investments to service people.

There is no companion bill in the Senate, making passage of the year uncertain. Sen. Richard C. Shelby, R-Ala., Banking Committee chairman, has asked the Government Accountability Office to study the issue.

To comment, write Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA 20120-1111. E-mail: milupdate@jcs.mil or visit www.militaryupdate.com

Choice, here, is important be-



Bennie Keel, regional archeologist for the National Park Service, sits on the steps that once led to the Fort Pickens museum building at the Gulf Islands National Seashore on Santa Rosa Island, Fla. The area was damaged by storms. The Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society is collecting donations for victims of hurricanes in Florida.

Sailors asked to help Fla. hurricane victims

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER

Stars and Stripes

Sailors and their families are being encouraged to help shipmates victimized by Hurricane Ivan.

The American Red Cross and the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society are accepting cash donations to help sailors and Marines in and around Pensacola, Fla., which took the brunt of the hurricane devastation.

The Sept. 16 storm picked 130 mph sustained winds and caused millions of dollars in damage to the Navy's aviation training hub, which is home to Naval Air Station Pensacola.

The hurricane left dozens of military families homeless.

"The idea of making a contribution is that that could easily be translated into whatever resources that are needed by those people those two agencies are helping," said Chaplain (Capt.) Lorenzo York, special assistant for Pastoral Care with the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington, D.C.

Days after the storm, York spearheaded an effort to help medical personnel in the Florida Panhandle. The Navy hospital in Pensacola sustained about \$1 million in storm damage. Vice Adm. Donald Arthur, the Navy's surgeon general, encouraged sailors to make donations in a statement posted on the Navy Medicine Online Web site Sept. 27.

He wrote that his staff received phone calls and e-mails from people wanting to help the pummeled by Ivan.

The base is still picking up the pieces from Ivan. The Navy has temporarily suspended orders for transferring sailors scheduled to report to the Pensacola region between Sept. 14 and Oct. 31 because of the damage.

Many sailors and their families hit by the hurricane are starting from scratch. They lost furniture, household appliances and beds.

The Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society is paying travel expenses for families who lost their homes and will be temporarily live with relatives.

"In Pensacola, I got a number of shipmates and friends who were totally displaced because of damage due to the storm," said York, who was stationed in Pensacola in the early 1990s and grew up in nearby Mobile, Ala. Initial estimates put the cost of damage to the military bases in Pensacola at more than \$100 million. More than 90 percent of the buildings on the naval air station reported significant damage, according to base officials.

For those who would like to donate directly to the Navy and Marine Corps families, checks can be sent to: Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, 4015 Wilson Blvd., 10th Floor, Arlington, Va. 22203. Write "Hurricane Relief" in the memo section of the check and 100 percent of the amount will go to sailors and Marines affected by the hurricane. You can donate to the American Red Cross by clicking on the Web site www.redcross.org/donate/donation-form.asp. The donations go to military and civilian people hurt by the storm.

Army fills recruitment of active, Reserve troops

National Guard falls short by 10,000 soldiers

BY SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Army made its recruiting goal for active and Reserve soldiers for this past year, and now is concentrating on its new goal of 80,000 new active troops and 22,175 Reservists, said Maj. Gen. Michael Rochelle, commanding general of the Recruiting Command. The command surpassed its fiscal 2004 goal and added 77,587 active soldiers to its rosters; even with the country at war and a shift in mission mid-stream, Rochelle said on Friday.

The command started the year with a goal of 72,500 active-duty recruits, a goal increased in March to 77,500 to account for a law passed by Congress to boost Army end-strength by 30,000 troops over the next five years, he said.

The Reserve Component surpassed its fiscal 2004 goal of 21,200 by 78 soldiers.

The picture isn't so rosy for the U.S. National Guard, which is failing to reach its goal of 56,000 by 10,000.

Rochelle denied reports the

command had to relax standards in order to reach its recruiting goal for the coming year, refuting The New York Times article Friday that for fiscal 2005, at least 10 percent of new recruits should be high school graduates, down from 92 percent last year. Further, a maximum of 2 percent of recruits can enlist even if they scored in the lowest acceptable range on a service aptitude test, compared with 1.5 percent last year.

"The article is misleading," Rochelle said. The recruiting command has maintained the 90 percent of new recruits should be high school grads (and 2 percent maximum of recruits who can enlist even if they scored in lowest acceptable range on service aptitude goal) for the past five years and that the higher figures were interim goals set by the Army Accessions Command.

That "intermediate headquarters' involvement has ceased, he said.

Regardless of which command is setting the goals, however, Rochelle said he foresees no problem this year in maintaining the higher of the two standards.

The Army is going into the new year with a diminished pool of recruits from the delayed-entry program from which to pull to fill new ranks. About 18.4 percent of the 80,000 goal will come from that program, fewer than the anticipated goal of 25 percent.

"But that's not at all a big problem," Rochelle said.

Last year, the Army enjoyed "a very robust" pool of 45.9 percent of new recruits added from the program, nearly half of its goal. But the need to fill slots because of the increased recruiting mission total "placed a strain on the size of the debt pool," and shrunk it.

To help overcome challenges, the Army has boosted its recruitment advertising budget by \$12 million. This has added 1,000 new recruiters to go out and get what Rochelle, some other experts have labeled today's youth as the "millennia generation." These aren't in it for themselves, but "very much in tune with volunteerism."

Primarily, the Army is looking for combat arms specialists, linguists, intelligence specialists and medical professionals, from doctors and nurses to combat medics.

The biggest challenge for the coming year, Rochelle said, is competing against a strong economy and the challenges of attracting recruits away from colleges and university. About 1 in 4 recruits "comes to us with some college credit."

The Army is trying to appeal to them and partnering with colleges and universities with a program that lets them go to college first for up to 30 months before heading to the Army.

Sandra Jontz at email@sandrasjontz.com

Getting creative to recruit

The Associated Press

EVANSVILLE, Ind. — Meet Staff Sgt. Chad Cloutier, part counselor, part personnel trainer, part teacher's aide.

He is an Army recruiter with an arsenal that includes offers of more than \$70,000 in college aid and \$20,000 in bonus money, a black "Army of One" motorcycle parked outside his office, and a laptop that plays hip recruiting footage in potential recruits' homes.

With its troops stretched thin by the war in Iraq, the Army is rolling out the heavy artillery to sign up recruits.

It has increased the financial incentives to join. It is putting more recruiters on the streets. And it is spending \$180 million on promotions that include sponsorship of a rodeo cowboy, ads on ESPN, and a Web site that allows users to chat with recruiters at scheduled times 24 hours a day.

Military observers say the efforts might not be enough.

"It's just not easy to sell more people on the idea of going off to war when it's on their television every day ...," said Loren Thompson, chief operating officer of the Lexington Institute, a Washington think tank.

The active Army recruited 77,587 soldiers in fiscal year 2004, surpassing its goal of 77,000, Douglas Smith, spokesman for the Army Recruiting Command based at Fort Knox, Ky., said Wednesday.

The Army Reserves brought in 21,278, just over the goal of 21,200.

However, Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, has said the Army National Guard will fall 5,000 soldiers short of its year-end goal of 56,000 recruits. Observers predict the active Army and reserves could meet a similar fate next

year when their goals rise to 80,000 and 22,175, respectively.

Recruiters and those in the Army Recruiting Command are reaching out to potential recruits any way they can.

Cloutier, 31, of Boston has helped administer standardized tests at an area high school, evened out potential and new recruits, and made follow-up calls to struggling college students.

Cloutier's office is like many of the Army's approximately 1,700 recruiting stations: new, strategically placed near a shopping mall, and outfitted with modern furniture. Some potential recruits stop by just to hang out, and the recruiters work to create a welcoming atmosphere.

The efforts drew Josh Smith, 20, who joined the regular Army recently and hopes to go to Iraq and fly helicopters.

"I can't really picture myself doing anything around here," said Smith, a sophomore at the University of Southern Indiana. "I want some excitement and some direction."

He will get that plus a \$4,000 signing bonus and \$36,000 to pay for college.

The bonuses and entitlements appeal to some parents who cannot afford to pay for their children's education, Cloutier said.

In August, the Army increased the money offered for education from \$50,000 to \$70,344 by combining the Montgomery GI Bill and the Army College Fund. In 1985, when the Army College Fund started, the maximum offered was \$25,200.

The Army also started offering bonuses of up to \$8,000 to those with prior military service, along with other cash bonuses up to \$20,000. And it initiated a "Blue to Green" campaign that allows the 8,000 Navy and 20,000 Air Force airmen being downsized to switch to the Army without losing rank or having to attend full basic training.

IN THE STATES

Bush, Kerry square off over Iraq

First presidential debate lays out candidates' differences on foreign policy

BY TERENCE HUNT

The Associated Press

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — President Bush and Sen. John Kerry rushed back to the campaign trail Friday to try to convince voters they had won the debate over foreign policy and to renew the argument over whether going to war in Iraq had made the nation safer.

Three post-debate polls suggested voters who watched the policy-driven confrontation Thursday night were impressed by Kerry.

Most of those surveyed said he did better than Bush.

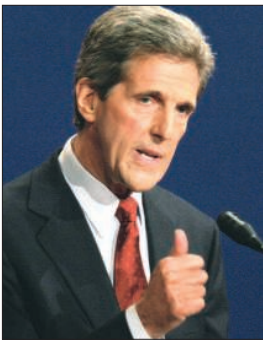
Kerry's running mate, Sen. John Edwards, said he told Kerry after the debate that "I think people saw the next commander in chief," and he criticized Bush for failing to acknowledge problems in Iraq. "You can't fix a problem if you're not willing to admit that mistakes have been made and that you have a problem," he told ABC's "Good Morning America."

Bush, however, believed he had effectively spelled out the strategy and shown the resolve with which he is fighting the war on terror, White House communications director Dan Bartlett said.

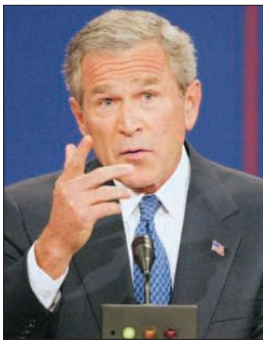
"I think he spoke from the heart, spoke with strength about the necessity for our country to fight the terrorists over there so we don't have to face them here at home," Bartlett told ABC.

Sen. John McCain, the Arizona Republican who informally advised Bush on how to debate Kerry, told reporters the debate was probably Kerry's "brightest moment" in the last six weeks.

Kerry's campaign prepared a



Left: Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., answers a question Thursday during the presidential debate at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fla. Right: President Bush speaks during Thursday's debate, which focused on foreign affairs and homeland security.



TV ad that featured newspaper headlines from Friday praising the Democrats' performance. The Democratic National Committee was rolling out a Web

around the world "in shatters" and later calling Iraq "this incredible mess."

Bush said Kerry had voted to authorize the war he now criticizes. "That's not how a commander in chief acts," Bush said.

Kerry summed up Bush's strategy for Iraq as "more of the same" and added: "This president has made, I regret to say, a colossal error of judgment. And judgment is what we look for in the president of the United States of America."

Bush acknowledged that not

every American agrees with the decisions he's made. "But people know where I stand," Bush said, suggesting they don't know where Kerry stands. "People out there listening know what I believe."

Bush appeared irritated when Kerry leveled some of his charges, scowling at times and looking away in apparent disgust at others.

Kerry often took notes when the president spoke. Trying to persuade voters that he is tough enough to be commander in chief, Kerry said, "I believe in being strong and resolute and determined. And I will hunt down and kill the terrorists, wherever they are." He said that Bush, in invading Iraq, lost sight of the goal of capturing terrorist leader Osama bin Laden.

But Bush insisted that "the world is safer without Saddam Hussein." He called Iraq "a central part in the war on terror" and said 75 percent of bin Laden's leadership had been brought to justice.

Trying to turn Kerry's criticism against him, Bush said, "I understand what it means to be the commander in chief. And if I were to ever say, 'This is the wrong war at the wrong time at the wrong place,' the troops would wonder, 'How can I follow this guy?'"

To Kerry's contention that he could summon broader international support for the war, Bush said, "They're not going to follow someone whose core convictions keep changing because of politics."

While Iraq was the dominant issue in the debate, there were notable differences on North Korea

Candidates share lighter family moment during debate

Los Angeles Times

For a moment, they were just two dads, commiserating about the challenges of raising daughters.

Toward the end of the first presidential debate Thursday, moderator Jim Lehrer gave George W. Bush an opening to go after John F. Kerry's character. Instead, his question sparked a rare personal moment between the rivals on a night otherwise dominated by aloof exchanges.

Bush thanked his challenger for the kindness Kerry's daughters Alexandra, 31, and Vanessa, 27, had shown his 22-year-old twin daughters, Jenna and Barbara.

"I admire the fact that he is a great dad," said the president.

"[I] appreciate the fact that his daughters have been so kind to my daughters and... what has been a pretty hard experience for, I guess, young girls seeing their dads out there campaigning."

Kerry, departing momentarily from his stern prosecutorial demeanor, looked touched.

"I appreciate enormously the personal comments the president just made, and I share them with him," he said. "I think only if you've — if you're doing this — and he's done it more than I have in terms of the presidency — can you begin to get a sense of what it means to your families, and it's tough."

"His daughters — I've watched them," Kerry added. "I've chuckled a few times at some of their comments."

Bush's daughters raised eyebrows this summer with an irreverent speech at the Republican Convention.

"I'm trying to put a leash on them," the president joked Thursday night.

"Well, I don't know," Kerry replied. "I've learned not to do that, Mr. President."

"That's right," Bush said, as both men laughed.

The candidates also had notable differences on North Korea and Iran, two nations suspected of pursuing nuclear weapons programs.

video showing clips of Bush appearing frustrated at the debate.

From the first question, Kerry went on the offensive, accusing

Bush of leaving U.S. alliances

In their own words

The Associated Press

Excerpts from Thursday's presidential debate at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fla.:

On invading Iraq

■ **President Bush:** "I believe I'm going to win, because the American people know I know how to lead. I've shown the American people I know how to lead. I have... I understand everybody in this country doesn't agree with the decisions I've made. And I made some tough decisions. But people know where I stand."

■ **Sen. John Kerry:** "I believe in being strong and resolute and determined. And I will hunt down and kill the terrorists, wherever they are. But we also have to be smart. And smart means not diverting your attention from the real war on terror in Afghanistan against Osama bin Laden and taking it off to Iraq."

■ **Bush:** "My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at and declared in 2002 that Saddam Hussein was a grave threat. He also said in December of 2003 that anyone who doubts that the

world is safer without Saddam Hussein does not have the judgment to be president. I agree with him. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein."

■ **Kerry:** "This president has made, I regret to say, a colossal error of judgment. And judgment is what we look for in the president of the United States of America."

On the future of war in Iraq

■ **Bush:** "My opponent says help is on the way, but what kind of message does it say to our troops in harm's way, 'Wrong war, wrong place, wrong time'? Not a message a commander in chief gives, or this is a great diversion."

As well, help is on the way, but it's certainly hard to tell it when he voted against the \$87 billion supplemental to provide equipment for our troops, and then said he actually did vote for it before he voted against it."

■ **Kerry:** "Well, you know, when I talked about the \$87 billion, I made a mistake in how I talk about the war. But the president made a mistake in invading Iraq. Which is worse? I believe that when you know something's going wrong, you make it right. That's what I learned in Vietnam."

and Iran, two nations suspected of pursuing nuclear weapons programs. Kerry urged that the United States hold direct bilateral talks with North Korea, but Bush called Kerry's proposal "a big mistake" that would crush multinational talks and remove pressure from China on North Korea.

Not quite the facts, ma'am

With little time for rebuttal, several facts misrepresented

BY CALVIN WOODWARD

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — John Kerry used suspect accounting in stinging up the cost of the Iraq war and President Bush got his opponent's position wrong on withdrawing troops as the two men rushed to knock each other down as many pags as possible in their first debate.

Sometimes, one candidate had a chance to take on the wayward claim of the other, as when Bush suggested he went to war in Iraq because "the enemy attacked us" and Kerry pointed out Saddam Hussein did not such thing.

Often, wrongful assertions or oversimplifications went unanswered, as when Kerry attacked Bush for spending too little on protecting the country from terrorism and declared, "That's why they had to close down the subway in New York when the Republican convention was there." The subway didn't close; some exits near the convention did.

"The format made it difficult for the candidates to rebut some distortions by their opponents," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Bush, twice during Thursday's debate, suggested al-Qaida is a vastly diminished terrorist force at the top, saying at one point that "75 percent of known al-Qaida leaders have been brought to justice," and at another, Osama bin Laden is "isolated — 75 percent of his people have been brought to justice." But al-Qaida is still considered a mortal danger in part because it refills its ranks and leadership. The president was actually referring to deaths or arrests

of operatives who powered al-Qaida when it mounted the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, not those behind the organization today. Earlier this year, the CIA estimated two-thirds of those leaders were gone.

Bush also mischaracterized Kerry's position on withdrawing troops from Iraq: "My opponent at one time said, well, get me elected, I'll have them out of there in six months."

In fact, Kerry's position has been that he would hope to begin a withdrawal in six months, not complete it. His aim would be to finish the withdrawal in four years if conditions allowed.

Kerry stretched in accusing Bush of spending too little on homeland security and too much in giving tax cuts to the rich.

"This president thought it was more important to give the wealthiest people in America a tax cut rather than invest in homeland security," the Massachusetts senator said. "And long before President Bush and I get a tax cut — and that's who gets it — long before we do, I'm going to invest in homeland security."

Bush's tax cuts were across the board, not just for rich people like Kerry and himself. And much of the money Kerry wants to save by raising taxes on the rich is already spoken for; he'd use it for health care and middle-income tax relief.

Kerry, as he often does, said the United States has spent \$200 billion on the Iraq war.

An analysis by Annenberg's FactCheck.org found the true cost to be under \$120 billion so far, and that Kerry reaches his figure by counting money scheduled to be spent next year.

Siobhan McDonough contributed to this report.

On the issues



How would you seek to revitalize communities in greatest need of economic development?

President Bush



"My Opportunity Zone proposal would assist areas that have lost a significant portion of their economic base and are transitioning to a more diverse, broad-based economy, as well as poverty areas eligible for existing programs. Opportunity Zones would ease that transition by targeting federal resources and encouraging businesses to invest in these

Sen. John Kerry



"I will create a Small Business Opportunity fund, expand loans and equity for small businesses, increase the federal government's venture capital investments and expand loan programs to help more small businesses get off the ground. I will increase the share of federal contracts for small businesses and ensure that minority-owned businesses get a fair share, use tax credits to cut

areas. They focus both on stimulating new economic activity and promoting education, job training, affordable housing and other activities critical for a vibrant community. Opportunity Zones also recognize that overcoming barriers to growth requires local involvement and requires communities to work with the federal government to reduce those barriers to development and job creation."

the cost of energy and reduce the cost of health care by two-thirds, and eliminate capital gains taxes for long-term investment in small businesses. And I will help small businesses offer retirement plans by using tax credits to help offset the startup costs of pension plans. I have a new jobs tax credit to cover an employer's share of payroll taxes for net new jobs created by small businesses in 2005 and 2006."

AP

Candidates show their differences

BY DAN BALZ

The Washington Post

ANALYSIS

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — It was no surprise that Iraq dominated the first debate between President Bush and Democratic challenger John Kerry Thursday night, but rarely have the differences between the two men — and the choices for the country — been stated so clearly and with such passion.

Bush and Kerry differed on almost every aspect of the war in Iraq and on other major foreign policy issues such as North Korea and Iran.

They disagreed over whether former president Saddam Hussein posed a serious threat to the United States at the time Bush took the country to war there. They disagreed on whether it was right to go to war as Bush did. They differed on whether the president has a plan to secure the peace. And they parted company on whether the certificate Bush has displayed as president has advanced U.S. security or weakened it.

If Republicans had hoped Bush could put Kerry away with a strong performance on terrain that has been his strongest suit, they are likely to be disappointed, as the challenger constantly challenged the president to answer for his policies. Both men accomplished many of the goals their advisers had set out and probably reinforced the strong backing each already has among his most committed supporters. But for those voters who remain undecided, Bush and Kerry may leave only whetted appetites for their two remaining debates.

This was a debate short of gimmicks, gaffes, canned one-liners. Bush and Kerry gave as good as they got and laid out for the coun-

try a choice between Bush's determination to stay on the course he has been following in Iraq or what Kerry said would be a genuine change in policy there.

Bush appeared defensive at the start of the 90-minute debate, and at times the camera caught him scowling or frowning as Kerry relentlessly attacked his record on Iraq. But as the debate continued, he passionately defended the core values of his foreign policy: taking the fight to terrorists and spreading freedom across the planet.

Kerry, who was under great pressure to perform well, repeatedly presented his case that the president has led the country astray and that only a change in leadership can change the equation in Iraq and attract the support of other countries to share more of the burden. He also sought to answer doubts about himself by trying to show that he would be equally resolute in fighting the war on terror, albeit in a different way.


Instant polls judged Kerry the clear winner, but Kerry came into the debate knowing he had to begin to undo the damage the Bush campaign has inflicted on him and reverse public perceptions that Bush is better equipped to deal with Iraq and the battle against terrorists.

Few strategists believed that this first of three presidential debates will, by itself, fundamentally change the shape of the campaign, but for voters wondering whether the choice is as stark as the two sides had been portraying it, the session provided a resounding answer. It sets the stage for promises to be a ferocious campaign over the next 4½ weeks.

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House rejects amendment to ban gay unions

BY JIM ABRAMS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House followed the Senate in decisively rejecting a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, ending for this year debate on what has become the dominant issue for the Republican Party's conservative base.

The 227-186 vote in the House on Thursday was well short of the two-thirds majority needed to advance a constitutional amendment, but fulfilled a promise by backers to get lawmakers on the record on the highly sensitive issue in the run-up to Election Day.

"This is only the beginning. I'm telling you," said Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, stressing that the issue was too important to abandon.

"Marriage is the basic unit of society, the very DNA of civilization, and if that civilization is to endure, marriage must be protected," he said.

Democratic opponents said the motives for holding the vote were tinged more with election-year politics than protecting the nation from gay marriages.

"The purpose in bringing this amendment to the floor today, just four weeks before the election, is to create the fodder for a demagogic political ad that appeals to voters' worst fears and prejudices," said Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland, the House's second-ranked Democrat.

Congress postpones highway, welfare bills

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Struggling to wrap up its work so members can campaign, Congress has effectively put off until next year passage of two top legislative goals: a new highway spending bill and a revised welfare reform bill.

The measures have been heralded as means to add tens of thousands of people to the nation's work rolls, by getting people off welfare or creating road construction jobs.

But on Thursday the House and Senate voted to continue the old highway and welfare bills into next year, acknowledging they didn't have the time or the votes to pass new legislation.

Congress, for the sixth time, voted to extend the six-year, \$218 billion highway and mass transit bill that expired on Sept.

30, 2003. It also approved for the eighth time a short-term extension of the 1996 welfare law that was supposed to have ended in September 2002.

Highway programs will continue to be funded for another eight months, and welfare programs for six months. Without those extensions, funding for both programs would have been cut off Thursday.

"This has been a maddening process for those of us who care about transportation," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore.

The House Transportation Committee, of which DeFazio is a member, originally sought \$375 billion for the next six years, saying this was necessary to ease congestion and improve safety on the nation's highways. But the White House protested, saying it was too much and the president would veto any bill that added to the growing federal deficit.

The measure drew the support of 191 Republicans and 36 Democrats. Voting against it were 158 Democrats, 27 Republicans and one independent.

The Constitution has been amended only 27 times, including the 10 amendments in the Bill of Rights, in its history. Amendments must win two-thirds majorities in the House and Senate and be ratified by

three-fourths of state legislatures. The Senate rejected the gay marriage amendment in July.

The House in recent days has also taken up legislation dealing with gun rights and the phrase "under God" in the pledge, two other issues of importance to social conservatives.

On Wednesday, the chamber voted

250-171 to overturn a 28-year municipal ban on handgun ownership in the District of Columbia.

Last week it voted to protect the "under God" phrase from federal court challenge. Both bills are unlikely to be considered in the Senate before this session of Congress concludes.

President Bush has urged Congress to take up the gay marriage amendment. Recent surveys in battleground states in the presidential race indicate roughly one-quarter of Bush's supporters say moral or family values are uppermost in their minds.

The gay marriage amendment said marriage in the United States "shall consist only of a man and a woman." It also would have required that neither the U.S. Constitution nor any state constitution "shall be construed to require that marriage or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon any union other than the union of a man and a woman."

DeLay said the need for congressional action was "forced upon us by activist judges trying to legislate from the bench." He noted that under 1996 legislation passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton, marriage is defined as between a man of a woman.

"Traditional marriage is worth preserving, because the nuclear family is far and away the best environment in which to grow children," said Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Colo.



Elodia Rodriguez, a member of Local 54's sister union in Las Vegas, gathers picket signs Thursday at the Local 54 headquarters in Atlantic City, N.J., in preparation for a strike against the city's casinos.

Hotel, restaurant employees strike at Atlantic City casinos

BY JOHN CURRAN

The Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — About 10,000 casino hotel workers from more than half the city's 12 casinos went on strike Friday, even though negotiators had reached a tentative agreement with three of the casinos.

Members of Local 54 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union chanted and carried picket signs outside seven casinos after going on strike at 6 a.m. The strike did not affect dealers and other workers in gambling operations, who were still on the job.

Union negotiators reached an agreement late Thursday with Trump Hotel & Casino Resorts, thereby averting a strike at Trump Taj Mahal, Trump Marina and Trump Plaza.

But other union members — ranging from bell captains to bartenders and pastry chefs to porters — went on strike at Harrah's Atlantic City, Showboat Hotel-Casino, Bally's Atlantic City, Caesars Atlantic City, the Atlantic City Hilton, Resorts Atlantic City, and the Tropicana Casino and Resort.

Two casinos that have forged separate agreements with the union were unaffected.

At issue was the practice of subcontracting by casinos, which lease space to restaurants and bars without requiring them to use union workers.

Police said there were no arrests and no violence was reported, but some garages complained that picketers were blocking entrances.

China will move to flexible currency

BY MARTIN CRUTSINGER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration, struggling to show progress in attacking this country's soaring trade deficits, won a commitment Friday from China that it would move "firmly and steadily" to a flexible, market-based currency. However, the Chinese offered no firm timetable for how long the transition will take.

Changing China's currency system has been a key demand of the beleaguered manufacturing sector in the United States. Companies believe China's current policy of linking its currency at a fixed rate to the U.S. dollar has undervalued the Chinese yuan by as much as 40 percent, giving the country a tremendous competitive advantage over U.S. products.

China's commitment came in a joint economic statement issued early Friday following high-level meetings between Treasury Secretary John Snow and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and their counterparts from China, Finance Minister Jin Rengqing and Zhou Xiaochuan, head of China's central bank.

The Chinese side reaffirmed China's commitment to further advance reform and to push ahead firmly and steadily to a market-based flexible exchange rate," the two sides said in the joint statement.

The statement said the U.S. side expressed support for continued efforts by China's government to "to bring about this goal as rapidly as possible."

The Bush administration has been pushing China for more than a year to allow the value of its currency to be set by financial markets. However, the Chinese insist this cannot be done until the country puts in place a number of economic reforms designed to bolster China's weak banking system and protect it from the volatility that would occur with a floating currency.

China's new commitment came in advance of its first-ever meeting with the Group of Seven major industrial countries, which was to occur over dinner Friday night. The G-7 has been calling for China to adopt a more flexible currency system.

DeLay faces more ethics problems

BY SUZANNE GAMBOA

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, admonished by the House ethics committee for acting improperly by trying to persuade a Michigan Republican to change his vote on a Medicare prescription drug bill, could face another investigation by the panel.

The committee on Thursday approved an investigative report that serves as "a public admonishment" against DeLay, R-Texas, Rep. Candice Miller, R-Mich., and the lawmakers they were trying to influence, Rep. Nick Smith.

The committee found after its six-month investigation that DeLay and Miller linked a favorable vote

by Smith to support of the House committee of Smith's son.

The ethics committee still must decide whether to dismiss or appoint an investigator.

The subcommittee to probe a separate three-part complaint against DeLay filed by Rep. Chris Bell, R-Texas.

The complaint alleges DeLay misused his office and federal resources for political purposes related to elec-

tions and redistricting in Texas.

The public admonishments issued by the House's Senate Ethics Committee are the lightest punishment the ethics committee can issue when it finds House rules have been violated.

The investigation, by a four-member subcommittee, was triggered when the retiring Smith said that unidentified lawmakers and business interests had provided substantial money to his son's congressional campaign if he voted for the Medicare legislation.

He was not persuaded and stuck with his vote against the legislation in the Nov. 22, 2003, tally that ended at 5:51 a.m. The legislation passed the House by five votes.

Associated Press writer Larry Margasak contributed to this report.



DeLay

Airport security tightens

Foreign visitors must now undergo checks including fingerprinting, photographing for short stays in U.S.

By ROBERT JABLON
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Closing a perceived national security gap, the United States has begun fingerprinting and photographing citizens of 27 countries — including nations that are staunch allies — when they arrive for short visits.

Business travelers and vacationers from the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany and other nations joined much of the rest of the world Thursday in being required to deliver "biometric" information to customs officials.

The program went into effect at the country's 115 international airports and 14 seaports, and will be expanded to border crossings later.

At Los Angeles International Airport, there was some surprise but no complaint as visitors, passports in hand, stick their right and left index fingers on a device that electronically fingerprinted them and then had their digital photos snapped.

"No problem. It's good for security, then it's good for me," said

Frank Herbert, 38, of Austria, who arrived for a Southern California vacation.

The photos and fingerprints were matched with databases to determine if visitors might be wanted for immigration problems and crimes or were on lists barring them from entering the country because of suspected terrorist ties.

The information will be stored indefinitely in a national database but Homeland Security officials promised its use would be restricted to ensure privacy.

"It's an inconvenience, but only a little one. They say it is for our safety and the safety of the American people," said Mario Steinbusch of Aachen, Germany, who arrived at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago en route to visit a friend in Kentucky.

The extra security requirements were passed by Congress in response to the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and have been in place for nearly all nations since January. An exemption was made for people from 27 countries who were making short visits. They still don't need visas to

enter the U.S. for 90-day visits, freeing them from having to undergo background checks.

The Department of Homeland Security estimated the new requirements would affect 33,000 visitors a day but would add only 15 seconds to the processing time.

But ending the exemption will "significantly enhance" security, said Ana Hinojosa, area port director for U.S. Customs and Border Protection for the LA airport.

"Terrorists don't necessarily have a particular nationality, or a particular name [or] age," she said. "It's a moving target and we need to be able to adapt."

The 27 countries affected by the change are: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

AP Writers Andi Almond in Los Angeles, F.A. D'Alessio in Chicago, Ken Maguire in Boston and Steve Simons in Newark, N.J. contributed to this report.



U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer Joshua Akronowitz fingerprints a traveler from Japan at Los Angeles International Airport on Thursday.

Ranch cares for pets after owners pass

By MICHAEL GRACZYK
The Associated Press

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Fifteen cats, 11 dogs, a pony and a llama live here, but this is no shelter, kennel or hobby farm.

The 8,300-square-foot ranch on the sprawling campus of Texas A&M University is an orphanage of sorts, a place for pets whose owners have died. Its caretaker, one of the country's top veterinary medicine schools, runs the place like a home, which is just what the pet's owners wanted.

The center has been such a success — primarily thanks to word-of-mouth by veterinarians — that the university on Friday will dedicate a 3,500-square-foot expansion financed by \$600,000 in contributions.

So far, 94 owners from 18 states have made arrangements for 250 animals to live at the Stevenson Companion Animal Life-Care Center after the owners are gone. Among them is Elise Lee Wear, a retired University of Wisconsin nursing professor who has enrolled her two dogs.

"It's very hard to say to a friend or somebody: 'Will you take my dog?'" Wear said. "My dogs are extraordinarily important to me, and I want to be sure they are really well taken care of, both medically and psychologically."

Each owner pays an endowment that begins at \$10,000 and varies based on his or her age and the pet's size. It can be paid up front or as a bequest through a will or trust. The center has collected \$4 million in its 11 years of operation. Veterinarian Henry Prenal and his staff have duplicated a comfortable modern household — a living



Baby is one of 11 dogs currently residing at the Stevenson Companion Animal Life-Care Center at Texas A&M University. The center provides a comfortable, spacious home for pets after their owners die.

room with couch and TV, a formal dining room and a spacious backyard. The pets are free to roam until 11 p.m., when they're tucked away for the night in their "bedrooms," individual aluminum enclosures that include a pillow.

Like children, cats and dogs that can't get along are separated, as are pets that are sick. Cats and dogs that do get along spend their days lounging on the floor, climbing on furniture, listening to music playing throughout the house, wandering outside. The pony and llama have their own barn and pasture area.

"I like to keep them happy, interacting with the others," said Janet Broadhead, a registered veterinary technician who's worked at the center for about four years. It's a challenge. They have different personalities. ... Some of them had never seen another dog."

There's also a room designed as an aviary, although the lone parrot is one of 21 animals that have died since the center opened.

"This is not an elitist program," Prenal said. "Most of the people who have animals here are not wealthy people. It's just that this is where they choose to spend their money."

Congress debates amendment easing presidential eligibility

By EDWARD EPSTEIN
San Francisco Chronicle

WASHINGTON — The constitutional amendment that could allow Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to run for president starts making its uncertain way through Congress on Tuesday.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, who first introduced the amendment in July 2003 — before Schwarzenegger announced on

Aug. 6 of that year that he would run in the recall election against then-Gov. Gray Davis — has scheduled the first hearing on the proposed amendment Tuesday in the Judiciary Committee that he chairs. The committee will hear testimony but won't take a vote.

Hatch's amendment calls for changing the Constitution's current provision, spelled out in Article 2 Section 1. Drafted in 1787, it says only natural-born Americans at least 35 years old who have lived in the country for 14 years can serve as president or vice president.

The Utah senator's proposed amendment calls for allowing people who have been naturalized citizens for at least 20 years to run for and serve as president. The Austrian-born Schwarzenegger, who has endorsed the idea of changing the Constitution, became a U.S. citizen in 1983 after coming to the United States in 1968.

Proposals for changing the Constitution have also been made in the House. The latest, introduced in September by

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., also includes the 20-year period. Others set a 35-year requirement. But none of the House proposals has come up for a hearing.

Support for amending the Constitution to allow naturalized citizens to serve as president came Thursday from House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco.

"I have long thought that we could revisit that issue," Pelosi told reporters.

But she said she thought the 20-year period of citizenship before a person would become eligible might be the wrong approach. Instead, she suggested the measure should be the length of residency in the country, coupled with a person becoming a citizen during that period.

"I think there has to be a reasonable length of time that the person has resided in the country," Pelosi said.

Nancy Pelosi
House Democratic leader of San Francisco

"I think there has to be a reasonable length of time that the person has resided in the country," Pelosi said. "It takes some people that long to get their Ph.D. I think you do have to go a little longer to be president of the United States."

Opposition came from Rep. Tom Lantos, D-Calif., who was born in Budapest, Hungary, arrived in this country in 1947 and became a citizen in 1952. "I am irrevocably opposed. Our Constitution should only be amended for the most pressing and substantive reasons. There are 250 million native-born Americans, and there ought to be enough talent among them to find someone to serve as president."

"I think there has to be a reasonable length of time that the person has resided in the country."

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Peters 'absolutely right'

Many Germans, and some Americans, are up in arms over what Ralph Peters wrote in his recent New York Post article. Personally, I think he's absolutely right and, based on conversations I've had with other Americans here in Germany, a lot of others agree with him, too.

I think it's pretty obvious that he's not talking about all Germans, just Germans in general.

Here are a few things to think about. Germans are screaming about how hardworking they are. Well, in New Ulm, the church with the world's tallest steeple has been surrounded by scaffolding since at least the 1970s. I think that speaks for itself about how hardworking a culture is, to take at least 30 years (and counting) to complete getting a building repaired.

Most of the civilian jobs on the bases are so infiltrated with Germans that when an American does get hired, he finds himself being brushed by the German majority and will do things such as ignore him and speak around him to each other in German.

Then there's the fact that Germany has been so adamantly opposed to offering any kind of help in our war on terror. Some allies they turned out to be.

I think it's asinine to continue to support this country economically with our jobs, and the money that we pump into their economy, when there are plenty of other countries in this region that are supporting us downrange with their own people.

So Ralph Peters, even though you're getting a lot of bad press, there are indeed a lot of us here who are glad that someone's not afraid to speak up.

Jessica Barton
 Kaiserslautern, Germany

If it's legal, it's OK

This is in response to the article "U.S. troops defend legal prostitution" (Sept. 26). If going to a legal prostitute is done in a well and responsible manner, and the activity does not interfere with the mission of the military, then there should be no reason why the servicemember should not be able to go to one.

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However, if the servicemember develops a sexual addiction and the activity does interfere with the mission, then counseling and consequences should take place just as with other addictions (gambling, drinking, etc.).

Married Servicemembers must also remember that there is an article in the Uniform Code of Military Justice against adultery (Article 134).

One airman in the article said: "If it's illegal in the States, then it should be illegal to U.S. military members."

If we're going to that extreme, then we might as well make the drinking age for all U.S. military members 21 regardless of the law of the land. If we make one extreme measure, then another has to follow. The argument can also be made that prostitution is legal in [parts of] one state (Nevada), so should only servicemembers from [those parts of] Nevada be allowed to visit legal prostitutes?

Finally, unlike the prostitutes in Asia who are sometimes forced into the industry, the prostitutes in Europe are self-employed and do their own business of their own free will.

Airman 1st Class Sergio F. Santos
 Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany

Prostitution rule 'bad idea'

In response to the article "DOD: Soliciting prostitute should end career" (Sept. 23), let me submit that this is a very, very bad idea.

First, I will point out that I have never patronized a brothel in Germany, although I have been invited by my friends on several occasions to do so. It's not for me and, I will submit that, like drinking or smoking, it is not a wholesome activity. But that is besides the point.

Adult soldiers, who fight and die for their nation, should be allowed to participate in a legal activity that all nonmilitary people are allowed to do, especially when this activity has nothing to do with their jobs. In Germany, this will accomplish nothing more than further alienating the local communities from the U.S. military.

I appreciate the goal of ending human trafficking, but this is really a widespread problem in places like Germany or Nevada. And in areas where it's really a problem, local commanders already have the discretion to make any establishments off-limits.

The Stars and Stripes article says this policy with U.S. soldiers has been completely successful in Bosnia. So the means are already there. To use the old saying: "If it's not broke, don't fix it."

A more important question to ask is, why isn't the U.S. military spending its energies on either shutting down human trafficking in places like Bosnia or putting pressure on their host nations to end it?

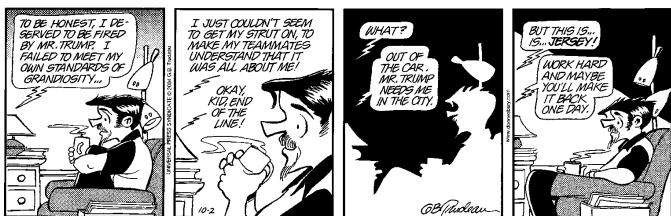
To punish the soldiers is ridiculous. What's next? Will it become a Uniform Code of Military Justice violation to wear certain types of clothing, since many sweatshops are run by human traffickers?

The military already has many regulations restricting sexual activity. We should attack the real problems here without needlessly interfering with soldiers' personal sex lives.

Capt. John H. Smith III
 Gelnhausen, Germany

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Doonesbury



Mallard Fillmore

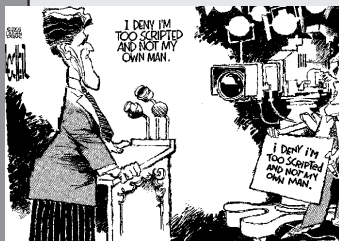


BY BRUCE TINSLEY

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Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



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IN THE WORLD

Russia welcomed into Kyoto Protocol pact

BY GEIR MOULSON
The Associated Press

BERLIN — Europeans welcomed Russia's move toward ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, but environmentalists cautioned that the accord, rejected by the United States, can only be a "first step" toward negotiating deeper cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

Russia's Cabinet on Thursday endorsed the 1997 agreement and parliament is expected to ratify the document by the end of the year. Without Russia, there would not be enough signatories for it to come into effect worldwide.

"Russia's green light will allow the climate treaty to leave the station so we can really begin addressing the biggest threat to the planet and its people," said Klaus Töpfer, the head of the U.N. Environment Program.

Russia's decision was welcomed by the governments of Germany, Italy, Britain and Japan, and by the European Union, which has been among the agreement's most energetic backers.

Once the deal enters into force, industrialized

countries will have until 2012 to cut their collective emissions of six key greenhouse gases to 5.2 percent below the 1990 level.

However, the United States — which alone accounted for 36 percent of carbon dioxide emissions in 1990 — and Australia have rejected the treaty.

"The Kyoto Protocol undoubtedly sets very low targets compared to what scientists say is necessary in order to keep climate change under control," said Germaine Canzi, a climate policy expert with the World Wide Fund for Nature. "However, it has always been considered a first step rather than the solution to the problem."

Thursday's Russian Cabinet decision to approve the protocol was, she said, a "massive breakthrough" because it will allow the rules finally to be applied and sets the scene for negotiations for future commitments.

The next round of international climate talks is scheduled for December in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and negotiations on greenhouse gas emissions after 2012 are due to start next year.

Next time around, "it is absolutely necessary to have a broader climate agreement where also the United States, especially, and Australia are taking part," said Leif Bernegard, a climate expert at the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency who took part in negotiations on Kyoto.

Few believe the United States will change its mind anytime soon, although there are hopes that business interest in developing clean technologies would push America forward. The U.S. position could also change if John Kerry is elected president in November.

"The Kyoto Protocol is now real — it's a very clear signal to the United States that the countries that have now made the step are being serious," said Joke Waller-Hunter, the executive secretary of the United Nations Climate Change Convention.

"The Kyoto Protocol also provides an opportunity to modernize technologies. I think U.S. companies don't want to fall behind."

Key points of protocol

■ The protocol obliges industrialized countries to cut or limit emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by an average 5.2 percent from 1990 levels by 2012.

■ Countries may offset the requirements by properly managing forests and farmlands that absorb carbon dioxide, known as carbon sinks. They can earn further credits by helping developing countries avoid carbon emissions.

■ The agreement allows for emissions trading — buying and selling the right to pollute.

■ The signatory countries face mandatory punishment if they fail to meet their targets.

— The Associated Press

Lebanon assassination attempt



Lebanese security inspect the car of former Lebanese Cabinet minister Marwan Hamadeh, which was damaged by an explosion Friday in Beirut. A car bomb wounded Hamadeh and killed his driver, security officials said. The explosion occurred in the area where the American Community School and the International College, both U.S. organizations, are located, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

Spain parliament expected to make gay marriage legal

The Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — Despite vociferous opposition from the Roman Catholic Church, Spain's Cabinet proposed legislation Friday giving homosexuals the right to marry and adopt children.

Parliament was expected to review and approve the legislation promptly. That would make Spain the third nation to legalize gay marriage.

"This proposed law ... removes a centuries-old barrier," Justice Minister Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar said at Moncloa, the prime minister's office and residence and site of the weekly Cabinet meetings.

The proposed legislation has been endorsed by the ruling Socialist party, which ousted the conservative Popular Party in elections in March and comprises the biggest bloc in Parliament.

"The United Left has shown from the first moment its total support" for the measure, parliamentary deputy Isaura Navarro said.

Gay advocacy groups were supportive of the measure.

"A child adopted by a homosexual couple is a child who is wanted, a child who is loved" and in no way worse off than a child adopted by a heterosexual couple, said Carlos Alberto Biedrich, president of the Popular Gay Platform.

The Catholic church adamantly disagrees. Speaking for the Spanish Bishops Conference a few days ago, Juan Antonio Martinez Camino claimed that allowing gay marriages is like "imposing a virus" or "a counterfeit currency" in society that damages the family structure.

If Parliament passes the legislation, Spain would join Belgium and the Netherlands in legalizing gay marriages.

Bosnians apathetic about election

The Associated Press

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — Bosnians vote Saturday in the country's first locally organized local elections since its devastating 1992-95 war, but prospects were clouded by predictions of a record low turnout and a disaffected electorate.

More than 2.3 million voters are eligible to elect new municipal councils and mayors in 142 municipalities throughout the country.

The elections will be the first postwar vote to be fully funded and organized by Bosnian authorities, as well as the first in which mayors of Bosnian cities will be directly elected.

But the pre-election buildup

has been dominated by voter apathy.

"Politicians in this country are not worthy of the leaving my warm bed and going to vote. They do nothing to make our life better," said Staka Janjic, a 47-year-old factory worker.

In the eight years since the first postwar elections were held here, Bosnians have repeatedly been promised more jobs and better lives by elected officials who have failed to deliver.

Alerted by various public opinion polls predicting a turnout lower than 30 percent, Bosnian officials have urged citizens to think about their future and vote Saturday — but they're having a hard time convincing a nation in which many people are struggling to make ends meet.

Mirza Osmanovic, 23, a student from Mostar, said he had no plans at all to vote.

"Everybody in politics here lies. That's it," he said.

A ban on political activities began at 7 a.m. Friday and was to remain in place until 7 p.m. Saturday, when polling stations for Saturday's balloting will close, Election Commission Chairman Velid Šehić said.

Voters can cast ballots for 70 parties, 18 coalitions, six independent lists and 144 independent candidates at 4,065 polling stations, Šehić said.

Since 1990, Bosnia has been largely led by three main national parties: the Party for Democratic Action, a Muslim bloc; the Serb Democratic Party; and the Croat Democratic Union.

Blair heart surgery successful

LONDON — British Prime Minister Tony Blair underwent a successful operation Friday to correct an irregular heartbeat and was recovering at home, a hospital official said.

Simon Wilde, a spokesman for Hammersmith Hospital in west London, also said Blair would have a "rapid and complete recovery" and there was a low risk the problem would recur.

"The procedure was successful in eliminating the atrial flutter," Wilde said.

Medical experts said the 2½-hour operation, carried out under local anesthetic, was a safe, routine procedure. Aides have stressed that Blair will be back at his desk Monday and intends to go ahead with a planned visit to Africa on Tuesday.

Blair, 51, looked relaxed as he was driven away from his Downing Street residence, accompanied by his wife, Cherie, in an official car at about 7:05 a.m. Friday. He told reporters he felt fine.

Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott stood by Blair while he underwent the operation.

From The Associated Press

EU debates need for immigrant camps

BY CONSTANT BRAND

The Associated Press

SCHENINGEN, Netherlands — European Union justice and interior ministers clashed Friday over a plan to set up camps in North Africa to process immigrants and asylum seekers to help stop the flow of illegal migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Europe.

Germany, backed by Italy, floated the idea of camps in the wake of a wave of landings by hundreds of illegal on the Italian coast this summer.

Another 400 illegal immigrants landed Thursday on a tiny island off Sicily.

Human rights activists and the United Nations' refugee agency fear the camps could do more harm than good. They claim potential host countries do not meet international human rights standards and cannot be expected to safely house asylum seekers.

The issue has divided EU nations.

While Britain and Austria have voiced support for the idea, France, Spain and Sweden are hesitant to accept the idea.

German Interior Minister Otto Schily suggested the EU look at the possibility of setting up transit centers in North Africa to process asylum claimants.

A plan by EU Justice and Home Affairs Commissioner Antonio Vitorino to fund five U.N. refugee agency pilot projects to upgrade existing processing centers in North Africa was also met with criticism.

Vitorino said his plan, which was backed by the Netherlands, would improve asylum seeker conditions in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania.

"There is today an emergency situation, particularly in the Mediterranean," Vitorino said. "We need to find a rapid solution for this humanitarian situation we are confronted with."

But French Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin said he was totally against the

idea. "We are not taking part in this plan," de Villepin said. "It will be very destabilizing for these countries." He said "further study" was needed on the pilot plans.

"We have to be realistic, we all know the example of Sangatte," de Villepin said, referring to a Red Cross center that took in thousands of refugees trying to get to Britain. The center in northern France was shut down in 2002 after failed attempts to curb clandestine groups transporting illegals across to Britain.

"The only benefactors are the mafia rings of such camps," de Villepin said.

Vitorino said the projects would not involve the EU setting up camps, but would offer training and seek to improve conditions in existing transit centers.

"This pilot project is not about camps," Vitorino said. "It's about enhancing the capacity of certain countries."

As part of the plan, the EU head office, the European Commission, would pay 80 percent of the tab to fund the projects.

Vitorino said the plan was conditional on the North African host countries meeting United Nations human rights standards under the Geneva Conventions.

Libya has yet to sign and implement the U.N. accord.

Schily told EU ministers they "could not wait" and needed to act fast to prevent further deaths of migrants trying to get to Europe, across the Mediterranean Sea.

Rand Lubbers, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, told the EU ministers he favored the pilot projects in principle.

"I am happy to discuss the idea," Lubbers was quoted as telling the meeting via video link from Geneva. "We have to create a workable approach with international monitoring."

A similar proposal made by British Prime Minister Tony Blair last year was rejected by many EU nations fearing the plans went too far and could risk the rights of asylum seekers.

Brussel workers seek night-flight settlement

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Unions demonstrated at Brussels international airport and delayed some flights Friday to push their demands for a deal between the authorities and parcel service DHL that would keep thousands of jobs in Belgium.

Airport workers have been outraged that an agreement has stalled for weeks over how to balance DHL's demands for more night flights with local residents' concerns over noise.

"We limited our action because we did not want to pester the passengers," said union representative Hendrik Vermeersch. "We wanted to give the authorities and DHL a signal that enough is enough. We need a deal now."

Several hundred workers assembled in the departure hall for a short demonstration, which included a few flights. Employees of other companies at the airport joined in.

Meanwhile, DHL was expected to answer a request from the government that asked from a clear commitment to use less noisy planes for overnight intercontinental flights. DHL wants to expand its hub in Brussels, which would bring more jobs but also increased noise pollution.

The issue has gained center stage over the past two weeks because it highlights the struggle within the government to meet its commitment to increase employment in Belgium, even if doing so may come at the cost of more environmental damage.

For days, regional authorities have been unsuccessfully negotiating over whose territory the proposed increase in night flights should go.

The international parcel service is considering moving its hub out of Belgium, either to Leipzig, Germany or Vatro, France, if it cannot increase night flights. The company provides direct and indirect employment for about 5,800 people.



DNA tests hint grave in Spain may have 'Columbus' remains

BY DANIEL WOOLLS

The Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — Researchers studying DNA from 500-year-old bone slivers said Friday that preliminary data suggests Christopher Columbus might be buried in Spain, rather than in a rival tomb in the Dominican Republic.

The team insisted it had reached no firm conclusion and more research was needed. But it said some DNA samples taken from bones that Spain says are the explorer's matched DNA from a body widely believed to be that of his brother Diego.

Both were unearthed in Seville over the past two years as part of an experiment to settle a 100-year-old argument over whether Columbus is buried in Spain or the Dominican Republic, both of which boast ornate graves that purported to hold his remains.

But DNA degrades over time, and much of the genetic material the Spanish team analyzed was of awful shape. "It is degraded, it is fragmented, and we don't have much of it," forensic geneticist Jose Antonio Lorente said.

Of the samples taken from the two purported Columbus brothers, 80 percent is indecipherable so far, but 20 percent of it matches, sug-

gesting Spain might have the right Christopher Columbus corpse.

"This is like halftime at a soccer game with the score 1-0. Do you know just because of that who is going to win? No, you don't," said Lorente, director of genetics lab at the University of Granada that often works with the FBI.

Lorente was part of a research team that dug up and extracted DNA material from three sets of bones: the one Spain claims came from Columbus, one historians are certain belong to his son Hernando and one that researchers believe is Columbus' brother Diego.

The research team found Hernando's DNA in good shape. The problem is siblings share DNA from one part of the human cell, and parents and their children from another. The purported Columbus remains have so far yielded none of the kind of DNA needed to check against Hernando's, Lorente said.

Another big missing piece is genetic material from the body buried in the Dominican capital, Santo Domingo, where a sprawling, cross-shaped lighthouse called the Faro a Colon is also said to hold the remains of the explorer known in Spanish as Cristobal Colon. "It is very important to analyze the remains in the Dominican Republic

to see if they coincide or not," said Marcial Castro, the lead historian and mastermind of the project.

In the Dominican Republic, Victor Felix, a spokesman for the Culture Ministry, dismissed suggestions it might hold the wrong bones. "Of course we are the ones who have the bones, said Felix. "Our historical studies have proven this."

Columbus died and was buried in Spain on May 20, 1506. He had asked to be buried in the Americas, but no church of sufficient stature existed there.

In 1537, Maria de Rojas y Toledo, widow of Columbus' son Diego sent the bones of her husband and his father to the cathedral in Santo Domingo to be buried. They lay until 1795, when Spain ceded the island of Hispaniola to France and decided Columbus' remains should not fall into the hands of foreigners. A set of remains that the Spaniards believed were Columbus' were first shipped back to Seville when the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898.

In 1877, workers digging in the Santo Domingo cathedral unearthed a leaden box containing bones and bearing the inscription, "Illustrious and distinguished male, don Cristobal Colon." Claiming these are the genuine remains, the Dominicans say the Spaniards took the wrong body back in 1795.

Act snuffed out

MI GRAND RAPIDS — Worried that a flaming man fired from a cannon might send the wrong message to children on the eve of Fire Prevention Week, the city commission has snuffed out the act of a headliner with the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

"Bailey's Comet" will not soar brightly when "The Greatest Show on Earth" visits Van Andel Arena this week.

The circus' city fireworks permit still will allow performer Tina Miser to shoot her husband out of a cannon. But it won't let her douse him with lighter fluid before she sends him sailing across the arena.

Brian Miser, whom the circus promotes as a "human fireball," wears two fireproof suits and is doused with fire extinguishers when he lands, so the act probably would pass a city safety inspection, Fire Safety Inspector Ted Jensen said.

Rush-hour traffic blues

CT NEW CANAAN — John Kjekstad, hoping to avoid rush-hour traffic on the way home, found a quick, but ultimately illegal way to get home: via helicopter.

Kjekstad, who runs two helicopter and airplane charter companies, had planned Thursday to land his chopper at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey and drive home to New Canaan.

On his way to the airport, though, Kjekstad told police he saw bumper-to-bumper traffic on the Merritt Parkway and chose to fly home instead.

After landing in his back yard, a neighbor complained.

He was issued a \$75 ticket for violating a town ordinance prohibiting landing aircraft on residential property, Sgt. Louis Gannon said Tuesday.

Cop charged with assault

TX HOUSTON — A Prairie View A&M University police officer is accused of opening fire on another motorist after a wreck, according to reports.

Officer Isabel Orellana is charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and driving while intoxicated, according to Houston police. The motorist, Steve Lam, was uninjured.

Orellana, 30, was off duty and not wearing a police uniform at the time of the shooting about 3 a.m. on Sunday.

The shooting occurred after Orellana's Ford Mustang struck the 23-year-old Lam's truck, causing minor damage, police said.

Orellana, who appeared to be intoxicated, refused to exchange information with Lam and told him she wanted to "handle this tomorrow," police told the Houston Chronicle in Thursday's editions.

Whale surfing

CA SAN CLEMENTE — A surfer says the swell he was riding on a recent trip turned out to be more than just a wave — it was a whale.

Spyros Vamvas, a 60-year-old San Clemente therapist, felt the ocean swirl under him and was lifted up by the giant mammal.

"All of a sudden I just felt, wow, this huge noise and bump," said Vamvas, "and it lifted my board



up. I'm looking down, and there's just swirling water and I see barrels on the back of the whale. I'm used to dolphins. This was different. It was huge."

Witnesses at Lasuen Beach on Monday morning began yelling.

Vamvas had no idea how big the whale was. Others on the beach guessed between 15 feet to 30 feet long, meaning the whale was likely a juvenile.

Vamvas, who has been surfing since he was 12, said the whale lifted him gently. "I never changed position on my board," he said.

Really bad check

IL EDWARDSVILLE — In search of a date, an ex-con instead found a quick way behind bars when police said he tried to use a checking account that wasn't his — that of the Madison County Jail.

David Wroten was charged with financial fraud for allegedly using the account to try to cover the \$39.95 membership fee for an online dating service, prosecutors said.

"How dumb is it to use a law enforcement agency as your bank, so to speak? I guess if you're going to scam somebody, picking on John Q. Public is one way to go, but picking on your neighborhood police department is even worse," said Sheriff Robert Hertz.

Wroten, 20, allegedly got the ac-

count number from a check issued to him for money left over in a jail account when he was released in April after being held there on a theft charge.

Holy antennas

VT NEWPORT — Members of St. Mary Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Church can get a glimpse of what cellular antennas would look like in their church.

Three cellular phone antennas were temporarily installed in a steeple.

Verizon Wireless plans to install six permanent antennas in the church's two steeples. Although more than a year ago the parish council accepted with little fanfare Verizon's offer to pay \$1,500 a month for use of the steeples, it has become a divisive issue among members of the church. It would be the first Catholic church in the state to house cellular antennas.

The project might still need approval by the District 7 Environmental Commission. In the next week, the district commission coordinator will decide whether the aesthetic impact merits a hearing.

Soiled clothing

VA NEWPORT NEWS — School officials blame a misadventure for a third-grader spending several hours in clothes stained with another student's urine.

But the mother of the boy said she's not satisfied with the explanation.

Michelle Morgan, school division spokeswoman, said a teacher, principal and assistant principal each thought that Daveina Mayo-Perry's son had received clean clothing. Another boy affected got some urine on a shoe, Morgan said.

The pupil who urinated on the two boys has been disciplined, Morgan said. She said the incident didn't stem from a fight.

Oil exploration

AK ANCHORAGE — Gov. Frank Murkowski says a new federal study shows oil exploration equipment should be allowed onto fragile North slope tundra draws earlier than usual. Most exploratory work is done in winter when the tundra is frozen and covered with snow, shielding it from damage. Environmental watchdogs say Murkowski is rushing to conclusions from the winter travel study, which has only one season of results.

Nerd tool spotlighted

IN WEST LAFAYETTE — A generation ago, geeks, nerds and brainiacs were easy to spot. They always had slide rules sticking out of their breast pockets.

Now a Purdue University exhibit pays homage to those low-tech accessories that were a necessity for generations of scientists, engineers and mathematicians.

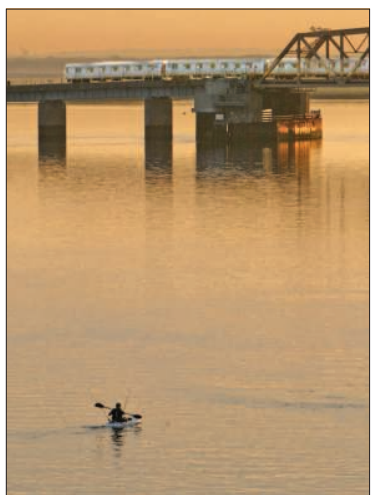
Nearly 200 slide rules are on display at Purdue's Potter Engineering Center. All were donated by Purdue alumni, among them Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon.

Slide rules were rendered obsolete by electronic calculators in the 1970s, ending a run that lasted nearly 400 years. But they are far from forgotten.



Energetic fundraisers

John DeCoursey, 16, left, of Everett, Wash., holds two signs, "Gymnastics For Cash" and "Support Our Bowling Team," as Bryan Alvarez, 29, of Bothell, Wash., performs a handstand in Bellevue, Wash.



Absolute solitude

A lone kayaker paddles in Jamaica Bay while an early morning A line subway train crosses a bridge after leaving Far Rockaways in Queens in New York.



Tiny dancers

Five-year-old Alayna Winslow, left, watches Sarah Jones, 7, during a performance by Dance Ltd. School of Dance during the 1st Annual Family Night at the Abilene Civic Center in Abilene, Texas.



A serene view

A rainbow is cast over Spooner Summit just outside Carson City, Nev., after a light rain storm passed through the area.



Monkey see, monkey eat

Indah, a female orangutan, enjoys some corn after she arrived at her new home, Great Ape Trust of Iowa, in Des Moines, Iowa.



Big appetite

Tessa, a two-week-old walrus calf, is fed a simulated walrus milk formula by SeaWorld San Diego animal care specialist Eric Otjen in San Diego.

Identification required

NM SANTA FE — The state Supreme Court ruled only first-time voters who registered by mail will be required to show identification at the polls, a defeat for Republicans who argued that all new voters who didn't register at a county clerk's office should have to show ID. The dispute centered around how many of New Mexico's tens of thousands of newly registered voters must show identification at the polls.

Protection for polls

IA IOWA CITY — A nonprofit group wants election officials to beef up security to keep ballots and voting machines secure before the November election. But the Iowa secretary of state's office says it's not necessary. The Election Center has sent letters to county auditors suggesting security measures, such as installing 24-hour video cameras, locking equipment and ballots are stored. The secretary of state's office says local officials should decide what, if any, security is needed.

Man trapped under tree

VT SHAFTSBURY — A 77-year-old man spent two nights trapped beneath a large beech tree he was cutting for firewood.

Edward Austin told police he had been under the tree before a friend walking his dog found him. Austin was in critical condition at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H. Austin was found by a friend, William Hardy, who was walking Austin's property with his airedale terrier.

The hunting dog seemed alarmed, said Hardy, barking and growling toward the back of the woods. Hardy eventually went to see what the dog was upset about and found Austin's tractor nearby. It did not take him long, Hardy said, to figure out that something was not right.

The local fire department was able to move the tree enough to free Austin.

Woman goes off course

MO ST. LOUIS — More than a week after she was reported missing, a 68-year-old woman with Alzheimer's disease who had disappeared while traveling was found by a detective in a New York City hospital.

Annie Burns was found unhurt in a hospital in Brooklyn, N.Y., more than 1,000 miles from her planned destination in Georgia, where she was traveling from St. Louis.

The family called authorities, who contacted Detective Rick Severino, head of missing persons for the St. Louis police.

Burns had been picked up by an ambulance while wandering Brooklyn's streets, but was not able to tell doctors where she was from.

17-foot python found

MS BAY ST. LOUIS — Baby's back Keith Berg's 17-foot Burmese python came out of hiding after a long weekend.

Baby had been missing, and reappeared when the smell of rabbits became too much to resist. Berg used the bunnies as bait.

Baby slithered out from underneath insulation in the attic of

Berg's apartment building and back into captivity. The snake was being kept in Berg's bathroom, but escaped when the door was left ajar.

A new cage for Baby is being built and Berg said the snake is moving there as soon as it is completed. In the meantime, he plans to make sure the bathroom door stays shut.

Judge rebuked

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A state commission rebuked a northern California judge for telling potential jurors that they should think of a phony reason not to serve if they couldn't acknowledge they were racially biased.

Placer County Superior Court Judge Joseph O'Flaherty, in cases in 1999 and 2000 involving black and Iranian defendants, told prospective jurors they should come up with some other reason to get off the jury if they had racial biases and couldn't admit them.

The Commission on Judicial Performance said O'Flaherty defended his statements by asserting that he was condoning lying only in limited circumstances.

Town receives \$9 million

ME SOUTH BRISTOL — A Louisiana woman who spent summers in South Bristol has left the town \$9 million in her will.

Ann Wilder Stratton, who died July 19 at the age of 80, visited the family's home on the S Road into the 1980s. Even after she sold the family property and gave the family owned Hodgkins Island to the Dunsmuir River Association, she continued sending \$1,000 "property tax" checks to the town.

Selectmen said they will recommend that interest on the money be used to lower property taxes and to obtain shorefront land for a town park and boat launch.

Fondling suspect caught

VA HARRISONBURG — A man suspected of breaking into the homes of 18 college women while they slept, and indecently touching some of them, is in police custody. Arnold Adjei Adjei, 23, of Harrisonburg, was charged with 18 felony counts of breaking and entering and two counts of sexual battery, police said. "It's a great relief to have this predator in custody," said Martha Garst, commonwealth's attorney for Rockingham County. "The sanctity of our homes should never be violated." Police say Adjei broke into the unlocked apartments of women in the area surrounding the James Madison University campus.

Healthy lifestyles

MN WOODBURY — The Bush administration is rolling out money for Minnesota to promote healthier lifestyles for children.

Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman announced that select schools and cities across the state are sharing in \$2.8 million in grant money.

Veneman says the money would pay for nutrition education, programs to promote physical activity and health screenings. Meanwhile, four Minnesota cities — Minneapolis, St. Paul, Rochester and Willmar — are getting grant money to foster healthy behavior.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

PUPPET A LA 'SOUTH PARK'

Cartoon masters weary after making 'Team America' with marionettes

BY JOHN HORN
Los Angeles Times

The Taj Mahal wasn't built in a day, and it looks as if it's going to take much longer than that to torch it.

Matt Stone and Trey Parker, the creators of the "South Park" TV series and movie, are scurrying to finish their next film, the action satire "Team America: World Police," and the Taj Mahal isn't making their destructive work any easier. The movie's central conceit — it's performed by one-third scale marionettes dangled over miniature sets — has been far easier to dream up than execute, and with two weeks left to complete principal photography for the film's Oct. 15 premiere, Stone and Parker are running out of time, money and energy.

Like the much hackneyed Hollywood popcorn movie, the world will go up in smoke unless Stone and Parker's crime-fighting puppets single-handedly come to the rescue. Stone and Parker's villain puppet, Kim Jong Il, is as ruthless as he is diminutive, and is laying waste to familiar sights spanning the globe. The North Korean leader already has obliterated London's Big Ben and Paris' Louvre. India's onion-domed landmark is the next to be vaporized, assuming Parker and Stone can figure out how to blow it up.

For the better part of an August morning on a Culver City soundstage, Stone has rehearsed a sequence intended to turn an enormous scale Taj Mahal model into rubble, but what sounds like a teenage pyro prank is proving much more complicated than that. The movie sends up show-business clichés whenever possible, and the

filmmakers are trying to jam in as many visual allusions as feasible. Stone, who co-wrote "Team America" and serves as its second unit director, wants the Taj Mahal scene to be a recognizable homage to the nuclear shockwaves leveling Baltimore in "The Sum of All Fears."

"It's a great explosion," Stone says of the "Sum of All Fears" blast. "It's probably the only good part of the movie."

Stone loads a "Sum of All Fears" DVD into his laptop and reviews the key scene with co-writer and director Parker, who is filming another "Team America" segment on an adjacent set inside the same soundstage. Special-effects technicians have rigged the Taj Mahal replica with compressed-air canisters designed to generate a sequence of debris-filled shockwaves that will blow out the innocent marionettes strolling past the Islamic shrine. After a quick safety speech, the fireworks begin. A smoky explosion rips across the stage with a roar, the lifeless puppets collapsing in a tangled mass in the Taj Mahal's reflecting pool.

"Damn it," Parker says, punching his director's chair as the scene is replayed on a video monitor. "One puppet screwed up the whole shot."

The video replay reveals that the instant the explosion hit, the hands of one of the scene's six puppeteers flinched just a few inches, sending his marionette skyward a split second before the shock waves arrive. What's more, the debris is out of scale, and the explosion isn't bright enough. It seems absurd to say, but the sequence looks fake.

Even though "Team America" is by outword appearances a feature-length joke, the film is painstakingly well made, from intricate costume designs to high-speed chase scenes performed in remote-control



AL SOB/LOS ANGELES TIMES

It was an affection for the 1960s TV series "Thunderbirds" that started Matt Stone, left, and Trey Parker to think about using puppets to make their movie "Team America." Even the movie's villain puppet, Kim Jong Il, gets into the photo. But the logistics in actually pulling off the production have been daunting.

cars. One tiny "Team America"-scale Uzi cost \$1,000 to construct.

To ensure Paramount would give enough money to maintain high production standards, Stone, Parker and producer Scott Rudin waived their collective fees of some \$7 million.

"There is nothing in the world," a weary Parker says, "that would ever make me want to make another puppet movie."

But a few days with Stone and Parker on the "Team America" set proves that underneath their frat-house fascination with language and sexuality so coarse it might make John Waters blush, they take movie-making quite seriously. The "Team America" production boasts some of the top artists in every trade: Cinematographer Bill Pope is coming off "Spider-Man 2" and "The Matrix" movies, while pyrotechnics supervisor Joe Viskocik worked on "Independence Day" and "Terminator 2: Judgment Day."

Stone, Parker and longtime writing partner Pam Brady spent nearly two years perfecting the "Team America" script. For influences, they studied scores of recent action and disaster movies, from "Alien" to "Top Gun" and "S.W.A.T."

They settled on the story of a mostly ghetto police force stomping out terror around the world. As Team America dispatches global enemies, its sometimes heavy-handed tactics generate international scorn, eventually prompting self-centered, left-wing celebrities to denounce the crime fighters. Michael Moore leads a demonstration against Team America, while stars such as George Clooney and Ethan Hawke help keep the superheroes captive.

As soon as filming began, Parker and Stone, who jointly supply many of the characters' voices, labored to find the right comic tone. The movie, they quickly realized, had to take itself earnestly, because it already is a gag.

Simply getting the puppets to perform more than a jerky-jerky walk, though, was nearly impossible. Having a character do something as basic as knock back a drink would take half a day, even though the filmmakers hired three dozen top-notch marionette operators.

"There are so many things that haven't worked," Parker says. "People may think it's the easiest movie in the world, but it's the hardest thing we've ever done," Parker says.

Even Trump's words are pricey

Donald Trump's \$200,000 speaking fee raised eyebrows when it was revealed by the University at Buffalo in Amherst, which had never before shelled out as much for a guest.

But the billionaire said that's not why he intends to give it away to charity. He said he does it all the time.

"I give it all away," Trump told The Buffalo News. "Every time I make a speech, I give it away. That's one of the reasons I make speeches. I like giving away money to worthy charities. I get a lot of money, and it is not hard for me to speak, and it works out well."

In fact, he said, the university is getting a bargain. "I actually get \$300,000 to speak," he said.

Trump, star of NBC's "The Apprentice," was scheduled to speak at the university this week as part of its "Distinguished Speakers" series.

Bowling challenge

Who's the kingpin, Al Franken or Bill O'Reilly? Franken had his way, the answer would be decided with a bowling ball.

On his radio show Wednesday, the satirist-commentator challenged the Fox News commentator to a "friendly" bowling match.

The proposed face-off would be a part of The Great American Bowl-Off, a one-day event being organized by the Web site Meet-up.com in bowling centers around the country.

The Oct. 7 event is designed to give political partisans a breather from the fractious campaigning.

"There's been a lot of back and forth between the two of us and this is just a good way to clear the air," Franken said on "The

Al Franken Show," which airs weekdays on liberal talk radio network Air America Radio.

"If Kerry and Bush supporters can put aside their differences for a day to compete, well then, I can Bill O'Reilly and I," Franken said.

O'Reilly and Franken have squabbled for years. On CBS' "60 Minutes" interview program Sunday, O'Reilly repeated his claim that Franken is a "character assassin."

Will O'Reilly accept the invitation? Rob Zimmerman, a spokesman for Fox News Channel, told The Associated Press: "Bill O'Reilly is not going to respond to anything Al Franken says."

The best tip ever

Tim McGraw now has a booth named

after him at Rose's Cafe.

McGraw drove a motorcycle from Moline, Ill., to Clinton, Iowa, on Saturday, before his concert that night at the Mark of The Quad Cities.

No one inside the restaurant recognized the country music star as he sat at a corner table with his manager and another man, eating a cheeseburger, fries, onion rings and a soda, said Rose Aden, the diner's owner.

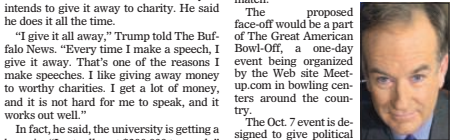
By the time she realized who he was, McGraw was out the door, she said.

"We didn't go chasing him," Aden said. "We were just running around like a bunch of crazy women here."

McGraw must have been impressed with the diner because his manager called later and invited Aden and three friends to a pre-concert party with the singer and free tickets to the show.

"I'm still like on Cloud 10 here, it's like, 'Oh, my gosh!'" Aden said Tuesday. "We're still in shock."

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



O'Reilly



Franken



AFRICA MIDEAST

Islamabad 33°45'N 73°05'E
Kabul 34°30'N 69°15'E
33°59'N 79°59'E

SUN & MOON

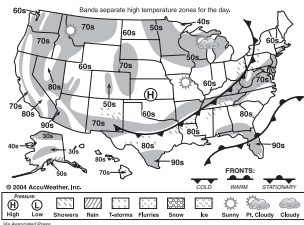
THE UNITED STATES TODAY

[illegible]

SUN & MOON			
Sunrise (London)	Today	Tomorrow	
Sunrise (Frankfurt)	6:57 AM	6:57 AM	
Sunset (London)	7:25 AM	7:26 AM	
Sunset (Frankfurt)	6:49 PM	6:47 PM	
	7:08 PM	7:04 PM	
			
Full Moon	Last qtr.	New Moon	First qtr.



As of noon, Eastern U.S. time



Age Group	Percentage (%)
18-24	10
25-34	20
35-44	25
45-54	20
55-64	15
65-74	10
75-84	5
85+	5

High	Low	Showers	1
Ma. Associated Dues			

Scheduled to **ETS** or **PCS**?

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every Saturday to find
Realtors at your new station.

STARS AND STRIPES®
Your Hometown Newspaper

Horoscope

This is the last day of Venus in bighearted Leo. Enjoy the frivolity of romance and the fire of passion, but don't expect it to last. We'll be getting more practical about love when Virgo accepts Venus as its new houseguest. Love will be shown in acts of respect and kindness rather than declared in the heat of the moment. Make a grand gesture now.

Joyce Jillson



TODAY'S BIRTHDAY
(October 2). This year should find you making great strides when it comes to getting big projects out of the way. If you've been putting off some monumental task like cleaning out the garage, having elective surgery or starting your own business, this is the year to do it. Your enthusiasm and determination are at their zenith, making you a magnet for success.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Mentally prepare yourself to launch into a new diet, fitness regime or meditation practice. Think about your goals, visualize yourself achieving them, and set a reasonable deadline. Start small, and work your way up.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Never underestimate the healing power of vegging out. If you can wholeheartedly embrace your laziness and revel in it to your very core, your body will probably thank you. No one can run on empty indefinitely.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). When you clear out the clutter, help help someone in need and help the environment, too. What could be more perfect? Recycle, donate your old clothes and appliances, or plant a tree. Choose a good deed that fits your style.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Got the blahs? Indulge in comforts of all kinds, especially foods. A hearty, hearty stew of potatoes, carrots, parsnips, butternut squash and onions should be just the thing to warm your heart. Get cozy with loved ones, too.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). A friend or special someone may be in need of your assistance and not even know it. Listen to your inner voice.

Is there someone in your social circle who could be drawn out of a blue mood? You're just the person to do it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Explore anything that interests you. With your organizational skills and willingness to see a project through to the end, you should be able to master any skill you want to learn. All you need is to find the right teacher.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Are you still holding onto something that's really outlived its usefulness? Face it: Time marches on, whether you're ready or not.

Change your tires, your storm window, your motor oil and your attitude.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Things are moving behind the scenes that you don't understand. If you've been beating yourself up over something, it's time to let yourself off the hook. People are too wrapped up in their own dramas to pay close attention anyway.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You gave in to the urge to splurge, and now, you're feeling the pinch. Your generosity is legendary, but now is the time to dole out financial aid to loved ones looking for handouts. Instead, help them help themselves.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Failure is an event, not a person. Remember that the next time you feel the need to criticize. We all have our weaknesses. Consider yourself lucky if someone loves you in spite of yours, and then, try to return the favor.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Get out into your yard or garden, and get to work. Raking, pruning and pulling weeds can be mentally therapeutic after spending your whole day behind a desk. It's also a pretty good workout if you give it your full attention.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Something or someone near and dear to your heart could be going away, but love and good fortune will be returned to you threefold. Whether it's a child off to college or a project you've shepherdized, letting go is hard but necessary.

Creators Syndicate

Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



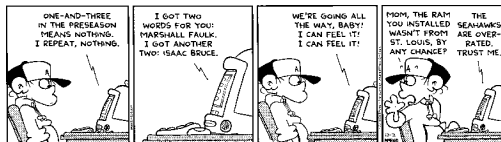
Better or Worse



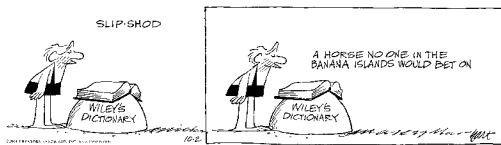
Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



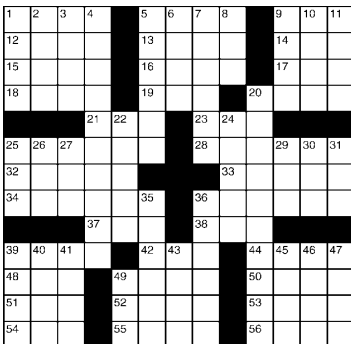
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Between assignments
- 5 Circulate
- 9 Tell a tale
- 12 Requisite
- 13 Carnival attraction
- 14 Big hoopla
- 15 Bedecked (in)
- 16 Surrounded by
- 17 HUD secretary
- 18 Stereo setup
- 19 Cattle call
- 20 Witty comment
- 21 Ram's ma'am
- 23 55-Across' backup, often
- 25 Golf legend
- 28 Educate
- 32 Check the fit
- 33 Foolish
- 34 Restitution
- 35 Nailed with a beanball

Down

- 1 Part of the foot
- 2 Where to find a hero
- 3 Read casually
- 4 "Walk on Water" singer
- 5 Constitution contributor
- 6 VIP's
- 7 Hatful
- 8 Become one
- 9 Irene Cara song
- 10 Fateful Forum day
- 11 Piece of hardware
- 20 "I Walk the Line" singer
- 22 Peter Pan's pal
- 24 Offspring
- 25 Bake-sale org.
- 26 Branch
- 27 Caustic solution
- 29 Squirrel's hangout
- 30 Inseparable
- 31 "Took center stage
- 35 Ross' craft
- 36 Pooch
- 39 Trademark symbol
- 40 Chester — Arthur
- 41 Piquancy
- 43 Pedestal
- 45 Subject of Weird Al Yankovic's "The White Stuff"
- 46 Sob
- 47 TV's Ricki
- 49 Long March leader

Answer to Previous Puzzle



10-2

CRYPTOQUIP

N F W T R P N G S T R X P
S B H R F R B A H V W Q W J S I W R G
S D E I J W S N H R T K R P W J ?
P X J W B V W W N F R Q W D ' P

GAGNE!

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I SUPPOSE A SOOTHING SALVE APPLIED TO EVE'S MATE MIGHT BE DUBBED "THE ADAM BALM."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals F

SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

Saturday

AFN-Pacific, 2 a.m. — College football: Utah at New Mexico.
AFN-Pacific, 2 a.m. — Baseball: Colorado at Houston.
AFN-Pacific, 4 a.m. — Baseball: Anaheim at Oakland.

AFN-Sports, 4 a.m. — Bowling: Baltimore at Indianapolis.
AFN-Pacific, 4 a.m. — Golf: World Championship, American Express Championship, second round (Ind.).

AFN-Pacific, 6 p.m. — Baseball: San Francisco at Los Angeles (Ind.).
AFN-Pacific, 6 p.m. — College football: Arkansas at Florida.

AFN-Sports, 6:30 p.m. — College football: Texas Tech at Oklahoma.
AFN-Pacific, 7 p.m. — Baseball: Atlanta at Colorado Springs.

AFN-Pacific, 9:30 p.m. — College football: Miami at Georgia Tech.
AFN-Pacific, 10 p.m. — Baseball: San Francisco at Los Angeles.

Sunday

AFN-Pacific, 1:45 a.m. — College football: Auburn at Tennessee.
AFN-Pacific, 2 a.m. — College football: Purdue at Indiana.

AFN-Pacific, 4 a.m. — Golf: World Championship, American Express Championship, third round (Ind.).

AFN-Pacific, 12:30 p.m. — Bowling: FedEx St. Louis at St. Louis.
AFN-Pacific, 12:30 p.m. — College football: North Carolina at Wake Forest.

AFN-Pacific, 1 p.m. — Baseball: Anaheim at Oakland (Ind.).
AFN-Pacific, 7 p.m. — NFL: Indianapolis at Jacksonville.

AFN-Pacific, 7 p.m. — NFL: NY Giants at Green Bay.
AFN-Pacific, 7 p.m. — NFL: Philadelphia at Chicago.

AFN-Pacific, 8 p.m. — Auto racing: NASCAR Nextel Cup, EA Sports 500.
AFN-Pacific, 10 p.m. — NFL: Tennessee at San Diego.

AFN-Pacific, 10 p.m. — NFL: Atlanta at Carolina.
AFN-Pacific, 10 p.m. — NFL: New Orleans at Arizona.

All times Central European Time; Ind. indicates delayed broadcast. All listings are subject to change. Some radio broadcasts not available in all areas. Visit www.mysfn.net for more information.

Pro football

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East
 New England 1 0 0 1.000 65
 New York Jets 2 0 0 1.000 65
 Baltimore 3 0 0 1.000 65
 Miami 0 3 0 0.000 23

South
 Jacksonville 1 0 0 1.000 35
 Indianapolis 2 1 0 66.7 50
 Pittsburgh 2 1 0 66.7 50
 Tennessee 2 1 0 66.7 50

North
 Baltimore 2 1 0 66.7 50
 Pittsburgh 2 1 0 66.7 50
 Cleveland 2 1 0 66.7 50
 Cincinnati 2 1 0 66.7 50

West
 Denver 2 1 0 66.7 63.4
 New York Jets 2 1 0 66.7 63.4
 San Diego 2 1 0 66.7 63.4
 Kansas City 2 1 0 66.7 63.4

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East
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 Baltimore 2 1 0 66.7 50
 Washington 2 1 0 66.7 50

South
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 New Orleans 2 1 0 66.7 63.4
 Houston 2 1 0 66.7 63.4
 Tampa Bay 2 0 0 1.000 36

North
 Minnesota 2 1 0 66.7 78
 Detroit 2 1 0 66.7 63.4
 Chicago 2 1 0 66.7 63.4
 Green Bay 2 1 0 66.7 63.4

West
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 New York Jets 2 1 0 66.7 63.4
 Oakland 2 1 0 66.7 63.4
 San Francisco 2 1 0 66.7 63.4

Sunday's games

Atlanta at Houston
 Philadelphia at Chicago
 New York Jets at Green Bay
 Cincinnati at Pittsburgh

New England at Buffalo
 Kansas City at Jacksonville
 Washington at Carolina
 New York Jets at Miami

Tennessee at San Diego
 Houston at Dallas
 St. Louis at San Francisco
 Open: Seattle, Dallas, Detroit, Minnesota

Monday's game

Kansas City at Baltimore
 Sunday, Oct. 10
 Detroit at Atlanta

NY Giants at Dallas
 Oakland at Indianapolis
 Minnesota at Houston
 Miami at New England
 Tampa Bay at New Orleans

Buffalo at NY Jets

Jacksonville at San Diego
 St. Louis at Seattle
 Arizona at San Francisco
 Carolina at Denver

Baltimore at Washington
 Cincinnati, Kansas City, Philadelphia, Chicago
 Tennessee at Green Bay

College football

Thursday's scores

EAST
 Connecticut 25, Pittsburgh 17
FAI WEST
 Navy 24, Air Force 21

Pro soccer

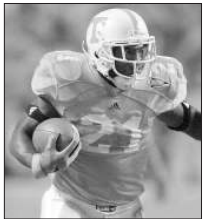
Major League Soccer

Eastern Conference

W	L	T	pts	GA	FA
1	1	5	13	27	41
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4	1	9	13	27	41
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Western Conference

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68	1	9	13	27	



Tailback Cedric Houston leads the Vols' rushing attack and averages 8.4 yards a carry. He'll get plenty of work while Tennessee protects two freshman QBs.



Auburn tailback Carnell Williams is averaging just under 100 yards rushing a game and leads the team with three touchdowns.

'Survivor' encore on tap in SEC

Louisiana State-Georgia, Auburn-Tennessee games are second pair of conference showdowns in 3 weeks

By RALPH D. RUSSO

The Associated Press

The rematch of last season's Southeastern Conference title game might not be the biggest SEC game on Saturday.

First, defending SEC champion LSU takes on Georgia in the hedges at Sanford Stadium. Then Auburn and Tennessee get going in front of more than 104,000 at Neyland Stadium.

No. 8 Auburn and No. 10 Tennessee are the survivors from the SEC's marquee matchups on Sept. 18.

Auburn beat LSU 10-9 at home to take an early, but important lead in the SEC West race.

That night, the Volunteers got a 50-yard field goal with seconds to play and a little help from officials who slipped up on clock management to beat Florida 30-28.

In a disappointing 2003 season, Auburn's 28-21 victory over Tennessee was one of the highlights. The Tigers handily beat the Vols, outscoring them 26-4.

"Our whole team is looking at it as a challenge on both sides of the ball. Last year, we got whipped," Tennessee coach Phillip Fulmer said.

LSU beat Georgia twice on its way to becoming co-national champion last season, but the Bulldogs entered this season as the favorites in the SEC.

"They are good in every area—offense, defense and special teams—and have a lot of players who are playing well right now," Tigers coach Nick Saban said.

For much of the Top 25, this is the week before the big games.

No. 2 Oklahoma hosts Texas Tech and No. 5 Texas plays Baylor before the Sooners and Longhorns meet in the Red River Shootout.

No. 10 California plays at Oregon State on Saturday, but No. 1 USC looms on Oct. 9.

In the Big Ten, No. 7 Ohio State, No. 18 Minnesota, No. 19 Michigan and No. 20 Wisconsin all face lesser conference foes Saturday. Next week, those four pair

off—Wisconsin is at Ohio State and Minnesota at Michigan.

But first things first—this week's picks:

Saturday
Texas Tech (plus 2½) at No. 2 Oklahoma: Sooners have won four straight meetings, and scored 116 points in past two ...

OKLAHOMA 52-20.
No. 13 LSU (plus 3) at No. 3 Georgia: Tigers last won at Georgia in 1987 ...

GEORGIA 17-16.
No. 4 Miami (minus 14) at Georgia Tech: Cane QB Brock Berlin could face backlit struggles continue ...

MIAMI 34-17.
Baylor (plus 3½) at No. 5 Texas: Bears shut out in past two against Horns ...

TEXAS 48-7.
No. 6 West Virginia (plus 2) at Virginia Tech: Hokies left Big East with two-game losing streak to Mountaineers ...

WEST VIRGINIA 21-17.
No. 7 Ohio State (minus 11) at Northwestern: Buckeyes have won 24 straight against Wildcats ...

OHIO STATE 26-12.
No. 8 Auburn (plus 2½) at No. 10 Tennessee: Tigers senior QB over Vols two freshmen ...

AUBURN 23-20.
North Carolina (plus 28½) at No. 9 Florida State: QB Wyatt Sexton gets start for Seminoles ...

FLORIDA STATE 36-6.
No. 10 California (minus 7) at Oregon State: No looking ahead for Bears, who have lost five straight to Beavers ...

CALIFORNIA 33-21.
No. 15 Purdue (minus 3) at

Notre Dame: Boilermakers have lost 13 straight in South Bend ...

NOTRE DAME 27-26.
Arkansas (plus 7½) at No. 16 Florida: No hurricane concerns for Gators this week ...

FLORIDA 30-16.
No. 17 Fresno State (minus 14) at Louisiana Tech: Tech could be pesky at home ...

FRESNO STATE 34-24.
Penn State (no line) at No. 18 Minnesota: Who's playing QB for banged up Lions? Does it matter?

MINNESOTA 54-16.
No. 19 Michigan (minus 18½) at Tennessee: Wolverines have won 12 straight over Hoosiers ...

MICHIGAN 42-18.
Illinois (plus 14½) at No. 20 Wisconsin: Badgers get RB Anton Davis back ...

WISCONSIN 22-13.
No. 21 Arizona State (plus 2½) at Oregon: Ducks are dangerous, even at I-2 ...

OREGON 27-24.
East Carolina (plus 29½) at No. 22 Louisville: Cardinals going up for Miami on Oct. 14 ...

LOUISVILLE 41-10.
SMU (plus 37) at No. 23 Boise State: Fortunate Broncos go for 16 straight wins ...

BOISE STATE 52-12.
Iowa State (plus 17½) at No. 25 Oklahoma State: Cowboys have thrown just 31 passes ...

OKLAHOMA STATE 30-10.
Last week: 18-1 (straight); 5-11-1 (vs. points)

Season: 70-9 (straight); 35-26 (vs. points)

LSU beat Georgia twice on its way to becoming co-national champion last season, but the Bulldogs entered this season as the favorites in the SEC.

"They are good in every area—offense, defense and special teams—and have a lot of players who are playing well right now,"

Tigers coach Nick Saban said.

For much of the Top 25, this is the week before the big games.

No. 2 Oklahoma hosts Texas Tech and No. 5 Texas plays Baylor before the Sooners and Longhorns meet in the Red River Shootout.

No. 10 California plays at Oregon State on Saturday, but No. 1 USC looms on Oct. 9.

In the Big Ten, No. 7 Ohio State, No. 18 Minnesota, No. 19 Michigan and No. 20 Wisconsin all face lesser conference foes Saturday. Next week, those four pair

injuries to Georgia's backfield might put pressure on QB David Green to move the ball vs. LSU.

LSU quarterback Marcus Randall, above, has split playing time this season with JaMarcus Russell.

College football schedule/statistics

Weekend schedule

Friday, Oct. 1

FAD WEST

Utah (-4) at New Mexico (-2)

Saturday, Oct. 2

EAST

Maline (-2) at Delaware (-3)

Brown (-1) at Rhode Island (-2)

Burgess (-1) at Syracuse (-2)

Dartmouth (-2) at Boston (-1)

TCU (-2) at Army (-3)

Massachusetts (-2) at Penn College (-3)

Bucknell (-1) at Georgetown (-3)

Forham (-3) at Holy Cross (-3)

Monmouth (-2) at Iona (-1)

Harvard (-2) at Lafayette (-3)

Albany (-2) at Lehigh (-2)

Wagner (-3) at Sacred Heart (-1)

Hill (-3) at St. Francis (-2)

Cornell (-1) at Towson (-2)

Colgate (-2) at Yale (-1)

Princeton (-2) at Columbia (-3)

Robert Morris (-2) at Penn State (-1)

Bowling Green (-1) at Temple (-1)

UCP (-3) at Buffalo (-2)

Marist (-1) at Cent. Connecticut (-3)

Connecticut (-2) at Villanova (-3)

SOUTH

Arkansas (-3) at Florida (-2)

North Carolina (-2) at Florida State (-2)

Wake Forest (-2) at N.C. State (-2)

West Virginia (-4) at Virginia Tech (-2)

Drake (-2) at Jacksonville (-3)

Hampden (-2) at Delaware (-3)

Elon (-1) at Georgia Southern (-1)

Valdosta (-2) at Morehead (-1)

Northeastern (-2) at Miami & Wynn (-2)

VMU (-4) at Charleston Southern (-2)

Texas State (-2) at Appalachian State (-2)

The Citadel (-2) at Duke (-3)

W. Carolina (-2) at Furman (-3)

California (-2) at Memphis (-3)

Arkansas (-2) at Mississippi (-1)

Tenn. Martin (-3) at Tennessee (-1)

Murray (-2) at Jacksonville (-3)

East Carolina (-3) at Louisville (-1)

LSU (-3) at Georgia (-3)

Marshall (-2) at Georgia Tech (-2)

Utah (-2) at Troy (-2)

N. Carolina A&T (-2) at Norfolk St. (-3)

Southern U. (-2) at Alabama (-3)

N. Carolina A&T (-2) at North Carolina (-3)

Panhandle (-3) at Northwestern (-3)

La-Lafayette (-2) at Fla. International (-1)

Valdosta (-2) at James Madison (-3)

Bethune-Cookman (-2) at Morgan St. (-1)

The Citadel (-2) at Duke (-3)

W. Carolina (-2) at Furman (-3)

California (-2) at Memphis (-3)

Arkansas (-2) at Mississippi (-1)

Tenn. Martin (-3) at Tennessee (-1)

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W. Carolina (-2) at Furman (-3)

California (-2) at Memphis (-3)

Arkansas (-2) at Mississippi (-1)

Tenn. Martin (-3) at Tennessee (-1)

Murray (-2) at Jacksonville (-3)

East Carolina (-3) at Louisville (-1)

LSU (-3) at Georgia (-3)

Marshall (-2) at Georgia Tech (-2)

Utah (-2) at Troy (-2)

California	85	678	339.0
Oklahoma St.	181	1001	333.7
UCLA	134	888	296.0
Virginia	180	879	284.0
Navy	242	1115	280.6
West Virginia	108	1104	276.0
Tennessee Tech	140	790	263.1
Louisville	156	769	256.3
Nebraska	128	690	245.0
Kansas St.	155	758	245.0
Oklahoma	147	642	243.1
Alabama	179	794	242.5

Division I-A passing offense

Team	Att	Cm	Yds	Pct
Texas Tech	240	145	438.5	60.2
Purdue	112	78	1008	35.6
Hawaii	117	65	605	5.5
Memphis	157	81	1306	32.6
Oregon	120	60	1100	5.0
Boise St.	134	83	1206	31.5
Middle Tenn. St.	127	89	1145	6.0
Colorado St.	155	96	1232	31.6
Northeastern	123	85	931	6.0
Arkansas	107	77	913	30.4
Arizona	139	82	1117	34.3
Miami (Ohio)	150	95	1103	28.6
Connecticut	125	81	1112	31.2
Toledo	127	88	1160	29.0
Brigham Young	157	85	1153	28.8

Division I-A total defense

Team	Plays	Yds	Pct
North Carolina St.	217	760	15.7
Wisconsin	217	760	15.7
Illinois	217	760	15.7
Florida St.	170	681	22.0
LSU	186	747	23.7
Nebraska	208	717	23.9
California	193	683	25.5
Alabama	230	987	24.5
Georgia	248	998	24.0
Connecticut	248	998	24.0
Virginia Tech	248	998	24.0
Georgia	176	781	26.0
Florida	193	812	26.5
Ohio St.	207	786	26.1
Virginia Tech	193	812	26.5

Division I-A rushing defense

Team	Cm	Yds	Pct
Nebraska	93	124	41.3
Minnesota	107	151	45.0
Iowa	126	222	55.5
Michigan	126	222	55.5
Rutgers	91	186	62.0
Boise St.	134	251	65.3
New Mexico	124	265	66.3
Washington	124	265	66.3
Fla. Atlantic	175	210	70.0
Boise St.	134	251	65.3
LSU	120	391	77.3
Michigan (Fla.)	120	391	77.3
Stanford	98	251	83.7

Division I-A passing defense

Division I-A passing offense	Att	Cp	Yds	Tds	Pts
Fresno St.	109	44	471	3	71.0
North Carolina St.	174	71	292	1	14.0
Miami (Fla.)	76	31	392	0	78.8
Wisconsin	96	43	469	1	83.0
Oregon St.	160	60	620	7	84.7
Nebraska	115	54	593	3	84.9
Southern Miss.	63	31	295	3	88.3
Ohio St.	96	51	401	2	88.8
South Carolina	132	66	702	2	90.5
Arizona St.	154	79	852	1	90.8
LSU	122	59	638	4	93.2
San Diego St.	150	77	802	4	94.4
Alabama	97	42	552	4	94.4
Tulsa	75	36	412	2	94.9
Louisville	92	45	534	2	96.1

Individual statistics

Division I-A rushing

Team	Cm	Yds	Pct
Moreno, Okla. St.	64	558	8.7
Benson, Texas	64	558	8.7
Wright, Okla. St.	64	558	8.7
Arrington, Cal.	64	558	8.7
Wright, Okla. St.	64	558	8.7
Drew, UCLA	59	508	8.6
Harber, Minnesota	59	508	8.6
Harris, W. Virginia	51	549	6.8
Wright, Okla. St.	64	558	8.7
Fason, Florida	62	596	6.4
Wright, Okla. St.	64	558	8.7
Williams, Memphis	114	490	4.3
Wright, Okla. St.	64	558	8.7
Purify, Colorado	64	558	8.7
Holmes, Colorado St.	59	499	4.0

Division I-A passing

	Att	Cp	Yds	Tds	Rtg
Rodgers, Cal	42	31	474	3	192
Orton, Purdue	106	74	982	13	188
Smith, Utah	86	55	952	8	187
Ainge, Tennessee	56	36	508	8	184
Caputo, Minnesota	55	32	627	5	183
Hagens, Virginia	71	54	770	4	182
White, Oklahoma	72	59	708	7	179
Hackney, UAB	62	39	734	7	170
Marshall, W.Virginia	75	47	684	8	169
Gradowski, Toledo	112	78	1031	8	168
Croyle, Alabama	66	44	534	6	166
Lefors, Louisville	54	39	532	2	163
Zabransky, Boise St.	115	77	1153	7	162
Jones, Arkansas	83	51	838	6	160
Orlovsky, WConn	129	89	1153	9	159

Former NFL lineman killed in fiery crash

Strzelczyk led police on car chase

BY WILLIAM KATAS

The Associated Press

HERKIMER, N.Y. — Justin Strzelczyk, a former player for the Pittsburgh Steelers, died Thursday in a fiery head-on collision with a tanker truck after he led state troopers on a 40-mile highway chase during morning rush hour.

Strzelczyk, 36, was an offensive lineman with the Steelers for nearly a decade until the team released him in February 2000.

State police said Strzelczyk crashed his pickup truck into the empty westbound tanker just moments after swerving around a tractor-trailer that pulled across the highway to block the east-bound lanes. Strzelczyk drove 15 miles on three tires and a rim after one of his pickup's tires was punctured by metal spikes thrown onto the road by troopers.

"It could have been so much worse. We're fortunate that only one person died," Trooper Jim Simpson, a state police spokesman, said. "It looked like an airplane crash. There was quite a lot of diesel fuel spilled that was burning. The pickup was almost unrecognizable."

Strzelczyk, who lived in McCandless, Pa., near Pittsburgh, had been involved in another minor accident about an hour earlier just west of Syracuse, which started the bizarre turn of events, Simpson said.

The hit-and-run occurred about 7:20 a.m. and state police put out an alert for Strzelczyk's pickup. Troopers spotted him

about 40 minutes later still heading east on the turnpike.

A second unit tried to stop the pickup by "body-trapping" the road with the "stop sticks," but Strzelczyk kept going. The pickup was clocked at 88 mph, Simpson said.

"He was going down the road, flipping off the troopers. He even threw a beer bottle at them," Simpson said.

A trucker saw the chase and pulled his rig across the road. Instead of stopping, the pickup crossed the grass median into the westbound lanes and traveled about three miles in the wrong direction before the deadly crash.

The collision with the tanker occurred about 8:15 a.m. when the highway was busy with morning commuters and travelers.

Police identified the driver of the tanker as Harold Jackson, 60, from Bowdon, S.C. He was treated at a hospital for minor injuries and released. No one else was hurt.

Mary Joyce Strzelczyk of West Seneca, N.Y., said she suspected her son may have been suffering from an untreated mental or emotional disorder.

"I'm kind of numb right now," she told The Buffalo News in Friday's editions. "I had seen trouble with his mood disorders coming." She said she last saw her son in Pittsburgh last weekend when she went to visit her grandchildren.

The 6-foot-3, 309-pound Strzelczyk, who grew up in a suburb of Buffalo, was an 11th-round pick in the 1990 draft out of Maine. He



Justin Strzelczyk

spent nine years with the Steelers and played in the 1995 Super Bowl.

Steelers chairman Dan Rooney remembers that even after rap music became the overwhelming choice of NFL players, Strzelczyk entertained the team by bringing a guitar to training camp.

"He was a very, very good guy," Rooney said. "He was a good player who added to the whole team activity by playing the guitar. On the field, he carried his weight. We'll miss him."

Strzelczyk was one of the team's most durable players before a knee injury during Kansas City in October 1998 required surgery that ended his season. He re-injured the knee preparing for training camp the next season and needed another operation that kept him on injured reserve for the 1999 season.

In his first eight seasons with Steelers, Strzelczyk missed just two games, both in 1997. Over a nine-season career, he played in 137 games and started 75.

Nine months after his release by the Steelers, Strzelczyk was arraigned for illegal possession of a gun. Police said he slammed a loaded handgun onto a bar in Pittsburgh when discussing the presidential election with a friend.

The Associated Press

DEVER — Denver Broncos quarterback Jake Plummer must remove the No. 40 decal he's worn on the back of his helmet since training camp that honors former Arizona Cardinals teammate Pat Tillman.

Tillman, the former safety who walked away from the NFL to join the U.S. Army Rangers and fight in Afghanistan, was killed in action in April.

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said Wednesday the league's long-standing policy prohibits personal messages on uniforms or helmets. Violators could face fines of \$5,000.

"We do that because we need a consistent rule. You can't just pick and choose and say one message is OK but another isn't. Where would you draw the line?" Aiello said.

The league has honored Tillman several times this year, including during the NFL Draft, the Hall of Fame induction ceremony in August, and on the second week of the season when all NFL players wore Tillman's number on their helmets.

Speed, intensity helping Cardinals force turnovers

BY BOB BAUM

The Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — The Arizona Cardinals are winless in three games, but are among the league leaders in one category — taking the ball away from the opponent.

Arizona has six fumble recoveries and four interceptions heading into Sunday's home game against the New Orleans Saints. That's tied with the New York Giants and Seattle Seahawks for most in the NFL.

A year ago, when they were 4-12, the Cardinals didn't get their 10th turnover until the 11th game of the season.

"I don't know whether it's luck or skill," linebacker James Darlington said after Thursday's practice. "But whatever it is, we need more of it."

New coach Dennis Green and defensive coordinator Clancy Pendergast are emphasizing speed and aggressiveness, a style they believe is a factor in the early turn of the defense.

"I think it figures in quite a bit," Pendergast said, "because we want to get as many guys swarming to the football as we can. Obviously, the more guys we have get to the ball, the more hits you're going to have from the backside. When the first guy misses, you've got a second or third guy there to clean him up, and that's where the turnovers really take place."

Green and Pendergast say they want a defense that takes the game to the opponent instead of reacting or using sheer power to shut down an opponent's offense.

"We have tried to be ball-hawking in that we have those kinds of players," Green said. "Then we try to do a really good job of hitting, to hit guys and try to knock the ball off."

It's more than luck if a defense is designed to have many players

running to the ball, according to Green.

"That's the idea," he said. "Everybody's running. You're chasing. You're trying to stay on your feet, get a lot of guys going in the direction of the ball. Then if the ball comes out, you're going to be in position to get it because you're hustling to it."

Arizona is plus-four in take-aways after finishing minus-13 a year ago. The Cardinals recovered three fumbles and intercepted a pass in last week's 6-3 loss at Atlanta.

The Cardinals rank last in the NFL in rushing defense, but thanks largely to the turnovers — and tough defense inside the 20 — Arizona has given up only 46 points through three games.

The takeaways are spread throughout the defense.

Safety Quentin Harris has an interception, a fumble recovery and two forced fumbles. Safety Adrian Wilson has an interception and a fumble recovery, and Darlington has an interception and a forced fumble.

One cornerback, David McClain, has an interception, and the other, Duane Starks, has a forced fumble and a fumble recovery.

Defensive ends Bertrand Berry and Peppi Zellner and linebacker Carlos Dunlap also have fumble recoveries.

"I think it has a lot to do with execution. If you don't quit on the play, then you can clean him up, you," Starks said. "If we can go out there and fly around, then we can knock some balls loose."

Starks was called a "Super Bowl" ring by the Baltimore Ravens, like the attitude he sees around him.

"I definitely like the defense. I definitely like the schemes that we're running," he said. "I also like that the guys really believe that we can get it done. We're flying around and counting on one another to make the play."

Plummer to take Tillman tribute off helmet

The Associated Press

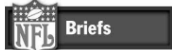
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The league has honored Tillman several times this year, including during the NFL Draft, the Hall of Fame induction ceremony in August, and on the second week of the season when all NFL players wore Tillman's number on their helmets.



"I want to honor Pat the best I can. I honor Pat every day, every game in my own private way," Plummer said. "I'm trying to get something done that won't infringe upon the NFL logo and uniform codes."

"I'm not going to fight the NFL," he said. "I'm looking for some kind of compromise." Plummer and Tillman became close friends after playing together at Arizona State and later with the Cardinals. Plummer said he has been wearing a small No. 40 on the back of his helmet since training camp.

The Cardinals will display Tillman's number on their helmets every game this season, but individual players such as Plummer are not allowed to do so.

49ers' Rattay expects to play
SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Quarterback Tim Rattay expects to return to the San Francisco 49ers'

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, followed by team's prognosis:
Giants: Safety Shaun Williams (left knee) underwent surgery on Wednesday and is expected to miss the rest of the season.
Patriots: Quarterback Tom Brady (injured lower leg) missed practice Thursday, but could be ready for Monday night's game at Baltimore.

starting line-up Sunday after a two-week absence.

Rattay separated his throwing shoulder during San Francisco's season opener Sept. 12 against Atlanta and hasn't played since. Ken Dorsey took every snap for the 49ers in Rattay's place on New Orleans and Seattle.

Rattay returned to practice Wednesday and threw for the first time without taking pain-killing injections. He had no soreness Thursday and looked strong leading the offense in team drills.

"I felt great today," Rattay said. "I feel 100 percent. I was fired up that it wasn't sore and I felt like I was throwing a lot harder than I had a lot of it. It was just popping out of there like it used to."



The deadline to enter your picks for the NFL Challenge is fast approaching!

Log in every week during the 2004 NFL Season and make your picks for the winners of the upcoming NFL games. Earn points for every winning team you pick and at the end of the season, you may find yourself the winner! The "winners code" from Monday's paper and NFL.com's point total for the week.

*Certain rules and restrictions apply. See the official website at www.oconus.com and www.strips.com. There is no cost to participate, but you must register to play.

Don't drop the ball!

Login to www.strips.com or www.oconus.com

Week 4 Pick Deadline:
12 noon, U.S. Central Time
Sunday, October 3

As a BONUS PRIZE, the top winner each week will receive \$100 toward merchandise at TeamStore.com

TEAMSTORE.COM

Stars & Stripes

OCONUS

Els takes lead in AmEx with 64 in rainy Ireland

The Associated Press

THOMASTOWN, Ireland — Wild weather seems to bring out the best in Ernie Els. He was steady and spectacular Friday in cool rain, warm sunshine and blustery conditions for an 8-under 64 that gave him a two-shot lead in the American Express Championship.

Golf roundup

Els emerged from his post-major funk as one of his best rounds of the year, starting with four straight birdies and ending with a 10-foot par putt at Mount Juliet to get in position for his first World Golf Championship title. "I knew it was going to be rough today," Els said. "I mean, 64 in these conditions ... it's one of the better rounds I've played this year. I haven't shot a low score for quite a while, so this was nice."

Els was at 11-under 133 and led by two over Miguel Angel Jimenez (68) and Todd Hamilton (69), who beat Els in a four-hole playoff at Royal Troon to win the British Open.

Tiger Woods' back injury was much improved, but his putter went on the disabled list over the final nine holes. He three-putted twice, missed a couple of short ones and wound up with 19 putts on the back nine for a 70 that

left him five shots behind.

"I putted so bad on the back nine that it cost me four shots," Woods said. "There's still a long way to go."

The road looks shorter with the Big Easy in command.

Els has played in Europe for a dozen years and knows not to expect anything in wacky weather. Still, he plays some of his best golf in the worst conditions, notably his 72 in the third round at Muirfield that sent him on his way to the British Open title in 2002.

"When it's like this, it's a good opportunity to do something, to maybe catch up," Els said.

Els, who started the second round three shots behind Hamilton, did better than that. And he wasted no time.

He birdied the first four holes, nearly making an ace on the par-3 third and was in the lead before Hamilton even reached the first tee. Els went on to birdie six of his first 10 holes before finally dropping his only shot on the 18th when his 7-iron went long and he missed a 4-footer for par.

The weekend is loaded with possibilities, with 13 players within five shots of the lead.

Justin Leonard, desperate for a strong finish to qualify for the Tour Championship, shot 68 to finish at 8-under 136.

U.S. Open champion Retief Goosen, Lee Westwood and Thomas Bjorn shot



Tiger Woods' struggles off the tee have continued in the American Express Championship. On Friday, he hit only six of 14 fairways, and through 36 holes his tee shots have finished in the fairway 13 of 28 times.

69 and were another stroke back at 137, along with Steve Flesch (70).

Woods was in a large group at 138 that included Brad Faxon (68) and local favorite Padraig Harrington (69).

Senden, Frazar, Day lead Southern Farm Bureau Classic

MADISON, Miss. — John Senden closed his 7-under 65 with his second eagle of the round and shared the lead with Harrison Frazar and Glen Day after the first round of the Southern Farm Bureau Classic.

Brothers Brendan and Deane Pappas were at 66 along with Loren Roberts, Bill Gussion, David Sutherland and Patrick Sheehan.

Grand jury investigation of CU's sex scandal will stay under wraps

The Associated Press

DENVER — A judge has rejected requests to unseal the grand jury investigation of the sex-and-booze scandal surrounding the University of Colorado football program, saying he could only release the report had no indication it returned.

Sports briefs

The sprawling investigation of the scandal resulted in a single indictment against a former football recruiting aide, Nathan Mackey.

He is charged with misdemeanor solicitation and two felonies: embezzlement of public property and theft, both related to allegations he used a school cell phone to call a dating chat line.

Mackey has been used a university-issued cell phone to call an escort service but that the calls were to arrange liaisons only for himself.

The grand jury reportedly criticizes how Boulder campus Chancellor Richard Byrny oversaw the athletic department and the climate athletic director Dick Tharp and football coach Gary Barnett created within the department.

The Board of Regents reportedly agreed to ask District Judge Jeffrey Bayless to suppress the report because the grand jury called them "unqualified" to oversee the athletic department.

Attorney General Ken Salazar, whose office investigated allegations that nine women were assaulted by football players since 1997, has called for a release of the grand jury report.

Bayless, however, said state legal

precedent was clear: He could only release a report if no indictments are issued. Salazar promised an appeal.

Sheriff's department set to release some records in Bryant case

EAGLE, Colo. — Some previously sealed documents and evidence from the sexual assault case against Kobe Bryant will be released Friday, the Eagle County sheriff's office said.

The records could include a transcript of the NBA star's interview with investigators, statements from some witnesses, an arrest affidavit and investigators' reports. They could include phone records and other documents.

Attorneys were reviewing the evidence to remove the name of the alleged victim and other information protected by privacy law, sheriff's spokeswoman Kim Anderson said Thursday.

Roddick, Federer win in Thailand
BANGKOK, Thailand — Andy Rod-

dick smacked 21 aces Friday in a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Sweden's Thomas Johansson to reach the semifinals of the Thailand Open.

No. 1 Roger Federer, bidding for his 10th title of the season, defeated Sweden's Robin Soderling 7-6 (3), 6-4 — including the top four-seeded players into the semifinals.

Federer netted faces No. 4-seeded Paradorn Srichaphan. Roddick's opponent will be No. 3 Marat Safin.

Craven gets ride in Talladega

PORTLAND, Maine — Ricky Craven, who lost his ride with PPI Motorsports, will be in the driver's seat this weekend for Joe Gibbs Racing at Alabama's Talladega Superspeedway.

The Maine native said the unexpected chance to drive the team's third car could lead to other opportunities, but no promises were made and he's not banking on any.

"More than likely this is a short story," Craven said.

Rodman works out with Nuggets

The Associated Press

DENVER — The point guard thought he was great. The general manager had no comment. Dennis Rodman said he thinks the Denver Nuggets could use a guy like him.

The 43-year-old former NBA rebounding champion's comeback attempt took another step Thursday when he participated in an informal workout with the Nuggets.

"Talk to other players and they'll say that wasn't a 43-year-old guy that was running today," Rodman told the Rocky Mountain News. "That wasn't a 43-year-old guy. That was a freak out there."

It was hard to tell whether he has a future with the Nuggets.

"I really have no comment," Nuggets GM Mike Vanderweide said. "There's not really anything to say in Dennis' situation."

Mavericks sign A. Johnson as player/coach

The Associated Press

DALLAS — Here's a rare scene: The Dallas Mavericks held a news conference Thursday to announce the signing of a player who proclaimed that if all goes as planned, he won't play a single minute this season.

And his bosses happily agreed.

So goes the hiring of Avery Johnson, technically as a backup point guard but realistically as another coach possibly even the next head coach.

NBA briefs

Johnson will spend the season on the injured list, unless a real injury to Jason Terry, rookie Devin Harris or swingman Marquis Daniels forces him onto the roster.

"If I'm out there starting, we're in trouble," Johnson said, flashing his ever-present grin.

Instead of a jersey, Johnson will wear a suit and work closely with coach Don Nelson and his staff. He'll spend half-times with them, not his teammates. And when he's on the floor during practices, he's more likely to be blowing a whistle than leading a fast break.

It's not as awkward as it might seem. Johnson did the same thing during the 2002 and 2003 postseasons, drawing rave reviews from players and coaches. His pep talk before Game 7 of a first-round series against Portland was widely credited with helping Dallas advance, ultimately to the Western Conference finals.

"He's a guy that I have hand-picked to eventually replace me as I go into my retirement years," said Nelson, who is under contract for this season and two more. "I am really excited to have him here working alongside of me."

Memphis sign leading-scorer Gasol, Swift

GRIZZLIES, Tenn. — The Memphis Grizzlies signed last season's leading scorer, Pau Gasol, to a multi-year contract extension. Terms were not available.

The native of Spain averaged 17.7 points, 7.7 rebounds and 1.6 blocks per game last season. The 7-foot Gasol ranked 20th in the NBA in field goal percentage and 18th in blocks.

On Thursday, the Grizzlies signed restricted free-agent forward Stromile Swift to a one-year deal. Terms of the contract were not released.

The 6-foot-9, 225-pound Swift averaged 9.4 points, 4.9 rebounds and had a career-high 118 blocked shots last season as primarily a reserve.

Fox, who won three titles with Lakers, retires

LOS ANGELES — Rick Fox retired Thursday, ending a 13-year career during which he was part of three championship teams with the Los Angeles Lakers.

Fox, beset by injuries last season, was traded by the Lakers to the Celtics on Aug. 6. It had been expected he would retire rather than report to Boston's training camp, which begins Monday.

The Celtics, who were aware of Fox's injuries when they made the trade, waived him on Thursday to facilitate his retirement.

The 35-year-old forward, who averaged a career-low 4.8 points last season, was bothered by foot, neck and back injuries that limited him to 38 games. He spent the season rehabilitating, but never fully recovered, his spokeswoman Staci Wolfe said.

Atlanta officials watch Griffin work out

HOUSTON — Atlanta Hawks General Manager Billy Knight and director of basketball operations Chris Grante in Houston on Thursday to watch troubled forward Eddie Griffin work out, a television station reported.

Griffin, cut last season by the New Jersey Nets and the Houston Rockets, said Atlanta and the Los Angeles Lakers are among several teams considering signing him for the upcoming season.

"Definitely L.A., with Rudy (Tomjanovich)" over the Miami Heat, Atlanta's coach, said Atlanta's Griffin told Houston television station KRIV in a report aired Thursday.

Griffin, the seventh pick in the 2001 draft, missed the entire 2003-04 season because of legal battles and substance abuse issues. He was given 18 months probation in March after pleading guilty to a misdemeanor charge of deadly conduct. He was ordered to continue outpatient treatment for alcohol abuse.

It's prime time for Los Angeles

Dodgers looking to clinch NL West title at home against hated Giants

The Associated Press

Los Angeles put itself in prime position to make the playoffs heading into the final weekend of the regular season, while Chicago, Houston and San Francisco were fighting to reach the postseason and San Diego retained only a long-shot hope.

NL Roundup
The Dodgers rallied from a 10th-inning deficit, then beat the Colorado Rockies 4-2 in the 11th in a two-run homer by David Ross.

Los Angeles took a three-game lead over the Giants heading into a three-game series against San Francisco at Dodger Stadium starting Friday night.

"The good thing is that they're going to see us clinch against them," Dodgers closer Eric Gagne said. "It's going to be amazing and a lot of fun — especially for the fans. They'll be able to see us do it against the hated Giants."

Down the West Coast in San Diego, Jerome Williams pitched seven innings in his first start in two months to lead the Giants over San Diego 4-1. San Francisco tied late Houston atop the wild-card race, one game ahead

of the Chicago Cubs, who lost 2-1 in 12 innings to Cincinnati. The Padres are three games behind San Francisco.

"We have two chances now," Giants manager Felipe Alou said. Ross was batting just 169 before his homer off Brian Fuentes (2-4). It was Ross' fifth homer this season and first since Aug. 11.

"It feels good, really good, for me to get a big hit and help the club," he said. "I haven't helped the team offensively all year and I finally did tonight."

Colorado took a 2-1 lead in the 10th on Jeremy Burnitz's two-out RBI single off Gagne, who was pitching one day after receiving a cortisone injection for stiffness in his right shoulder. The Dodgers tied it in the bottom half off Chin-hui Tsao when Cee-Seo Chang doubled, took third as Tsao threw wildly to first on Hasey Lopez' sacrifice bunt and scored on Jayson Werth's forfeit.

Yhency Brazoban (5-2) blanked Colorado in the 11th, ending it by throwing a called third strike past Royce Clayton with runners at the corners.

"There's just some magic here in this clubhouse," said the Dodgers' Jose Lima, who started on his 32nd birthday. "This is a special group. The way that we're doing



San Francisco first baseman J.T. Snow comes up empty trying to snare a drive down the first base line by San Diego's Ramon Vazquez in the seventh inning of Thursday night's game. Vazquez ended up with a triple.

it, it's like we don't want to give up. This is probably the best birthday gift of my whole career because we won and I helped the team."

Colorado closes with three games at Houston.

Giants 4, Padres 1: Ray Durham homered off Adam Eaton (11-14) leading off the four-run fourth. The Padres committed two errors in the inning, leading to three unearned runs. Williams (10-7) allowed one run and four hits, struck out three and walked one.

San Diego closes with three games at Arizona.

"What makes it worse is how we lost," Phil Nevin said. "We gave up three unearned runs, we had a guy pitching his tail off and we're pitching to Barry Bonds every time he comes to the plate." Bonds was 1-for-4.

Reds 2, Cubs 1: Chicago stranded 12 runners at Wrigley Field. Javier Valentin doubled in the go-ahead run off Kyle Farnsworth with two outs in the 12th following Adam Dunn's leadoff single off Mike Remlinger (1-2). The Cubs close at home against NL East champion Atlanta.

"It's tough to lose two 12-inning games in a row, especially when we had opportunities to win the game," dejected Cubs manager Dusty Baker said. "It's tough to lose like this down the stretch."

Mark Prior matched a career high with 16 strikeouts in nine innings, and Sammy Sosa hit his 34th homer in the sixth. He tied Harmon Killebrew for seventh on the career list at 573.

Dunn struck out twice, and with 190 batters the season record set by Bobby Bonds.

Juan Padilla (1-0) struck out

Michael Barrett with the bases loaded to end the 11th.

Brewers 7, Cardinals 6: Visiting Milwaukee sent the NL Central champions to their first four-game losing streak of the year. Matt Morris (15-10), the Cardinals' likely starter in their playoff opener next week, allowed six runs and seven hits in four innings.

Doug Davis (12-12) gave up two runs and seven hits in six innings. Keith Ginter hit a three-run homer in the first and Scott Podsednik a two-run drive in the fourth.

Phillies 7, Marlins 4: Pat Burrell went 4-for-4, including a tie-breaking two-run single off Guillermo Mota (9-8) in the host Phillies' six-run seventh. Todd Jones (11-5) threw a scoreless seventh and Billy Wagner pitched the ninth for his 21st save.



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Minaya faces daunting task

By RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Omar Minaya grew up a few blocks from Shea Stadium and realizes the task ahead of him.

"We know as New Yorkers nobody wants to hear excuses. Get it done. That's it," he said Thursday. "I have this dream of someday winning the World Series here in New York, a New York kid winning the World Series, and having a parade down Broadway. That's my dream."

A year after he turned down the Mets' offer to share power with Jim Duquette, the reeling team lured Minaya from the Expos with a five-year contract and the title of general manager and executive vice president of baseball operations. The way owner Fred Wilpon explained it, Minaya might as well have Harry Truman's "The Buck Stops Here" sign on his desk.

"Omar will have the authority and the autonomy in the baseball department," Wilpon said. "He will make the final decisions."

Duquette, who succeeded Steve Phillips as GM on an interim basis in June 2003 and was given the job last October, was demoted to senior vice president of baseball operations and will report to Minaya, who made his rep-



Minaya

utation as a talent evaluator.

Minaya is good friends with Duquette, who has two years remaining on his contract and will get the same salary he had as GM.

"I was extremely disappointed in this decision," said Duquette, an administrator rather than a talent evaluator.

"Having said that, I understand why they did what they did."

Minaya, the first Hispanic general manager in the major leagues, will hire the replacement for manager Art Howe, fired midway through a \$9.4 million, four-year contract. While Jim Fregosi has been mentioned as a candidate, Minaya's hiring could lead the Mets to consider bringing back Bobby Valentine, who battled Phillips and was fired after the 2002 season.

Minaya's arrival also could lead to a turnover in the Mets' clubhouse. Pitchers John Franco and Al Leiter could be jettisoned, and Mike Piazza could be dealt to an AL team and become a designated hitter.

New York, in its third straight losing season, is 70-89 and fourth

in the five-team NL East following consecutive last-place finishes. The Mets were 44-41 on the weekend before the All-Star break, then slid as they failed to overcome injuries.

"The first half was a step forward, and then it was probably two steps back in the second half," said Jeff Wilpon, the owner's son and the team's chief operating officer. "I don't want to lose. That's not what we're here for."

Following Wilpon's buyout of partner Nelson Doubleday two years ago, Jeff Wilpon has taken a more visible role. The Wilpons denied that ownership had interfered with baseball decisions.

"There's no question the perception is there," Fred Wilpon said. "I don't think it's the reality."

New York was criticized for a pair of trades on July 30. The Mets acquired Victor Zambrano from Tampa Bay for prospect Scott Kazmir, a left-hander who has struck out 35 in 27 1/3 innings for the Devil Rays. New York also obtained pitcher Kris Benson, who is eligible for free agency, from Pittsburgh for Ty Wigginton and prospects.

A turnaround next year is especially important, Fred Wilpon said, because the Mets' television contract expires after the 2005 season.

Athletics, Angels carry fight to weekend

Crosby's homer clears way for winner-take-all set in Oakland

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The biggest home run of Bobby Crosby's rookie season gave the Oakland Athletics a dramatic victory and set up a winner-take-all AL West showdown with the Anaheim Angels.

Crosby homered in the ninth inning Thursday to give the A's a 3-2 victory over the Seattle Mariners.

That moved Oakland back into a tie with Anaheim atop the A.L. West after the Angels lost 6-2 at Texas. The division champion will be determined in a season-ending three-game series at Oakland this weekend.

"That's the perfect way to end the season — just perfect," Crosby said.

Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki got his 25th hit to move within one of George Sisler's 84-year-old record, but it was Crosby's blast that had the bigger impact.

With the score 2-2 in the ninth, Crosby fouled off a bunt attempt before pounding a one-out pitch from Scott Atchison (2-3) for his 32nd homer.

With his grandpianos in the screaming crowd, Crosby raised his fist and rounded the bases while his excited teammates ran out ready to mob him at the plate.

"It's the best feeling of my life, by far," Crosby said. "That's like a dream, to run around and see your teammates waiting for you."

Suzuki extended his hitting streak to 10 games with a



New York's Miguel Cairo scampers back to first ahead of a throw from the outfield after hitting a single in the third inning of Thursday night's game. The Yankees won 6-4 to clinch their seventh straight AL East title.

run-scoring single in the third. He went just 1-for-5 and made the Mariners' final out, striking out against Octavio Dotel (6-2) in the ninth.

"I want to finish the season strong in Seattle and have no regrets," said Suzuki, who didn't want to talk directly about the season record for hits.

Jermaine Lee also homered for the A's, who had fallen out of first place Wednesday night for the first time last year Aug. 5.

Rangers 6, Angels 3: Adrian

Gonzalez drove in three runs with two singles and the Rangers beat the Angels in their home finale, a day after being eliminated from playoff contention.

Gonzalez's two-run single chased John Lackey (44-13) in a four-run outburst in the fifth that gave Texas a 5-1 lead.

Vladimir Guerrero went 4-for-4 with two homers for the Angels, who had regained sole possession of first place in the AL West by winning the first three games in Texas.

"If you told me at the beginning of the year we had to win two out of three to go to the playoffs, I'd take my chances," Angels first baseman Darin Erstad said. "It's going to be a lot of fun."

Yankees 6, Twins 4: Bernie Williams hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning and the host Yankees won the AL East title with their 100th victory.

"I've been through it so many times. I was picturing it in the on-deck circle, taking it all in, thinking it would be nice for me

to end it," said Williams, who missed much of spring training following an appendectomy.

"It was fitting. Bernie's been here the longest," shortstop Derek Jeter said in the champagne-filled Yankees clubhouse.

Williams' homer was the Yankees' major-league leading 241st of the season, surpassing the franchise record set in 1961. Hideki Matsui and John Olerud also homered.

The Yankees became the fourth team to post three straight 100-victory seasons, joining Atlanta (1997-99), Baltimore (1969-71) and the Philadelphia Athletics (1929-31).

Tom Gordon (4-9) pitched one inning to win it. Aaron Fultz (3-3) took the loss.

Orioles 9, Blue Jays 3: Miguel Tejada homered and drove in three runs to boost his major-league-leading RBIs total to 146, second in major league history by a shortstop behind Vern Stephens' 159 for Boston in 1949. Larry Bigbie, Jay Gibbons and David Newhan also homered for the host Orioles, who moved within four games of .500 (77-81) for the first time since Aug. 17.

Carlos Delgado and Frank Menchino connected for the Blue Jays.

White Sox 9, Royals 2: Mark Buehrle (16-10) pitched a four-hitter for his fourth complete game of the season and set a career best for innings pitched in a season (245 1/3).

Aaron Rowand hit a three-run homer in a five-run eighth and Joe Borach also homered for visiting Chicago.

Tigers 8-4, Devil Rays 0-6: Tim Lincecum hit a two-run double in the eighth inning to lead host Tampa Bay to a split of a doubleheader. Jeremy Bonderman (11-13) threw a four-hitter and Ivan Rodriguez hit his 250th career homer in the opener.

Bue Jays have no plans to follow Expos to U.S.

The Associated Press

TORONTO — The Toronto Blue Jays are financially solid and have no plans to follow the Montreal Expos to the United States, team president Paul Godfrey said.

"Are we looking in the mirror and seeing the picture of the Montreal Expos? No, I'm not too concerned about that," Godfrey said Thursday.

Godfrey cited local ownership, a viable stadium, a good television contract and improving attendance as reasons why the Blue Jays will not follow many other Canadian-based clubs to the United States. On Wednesday, baseball announced that the Expos were headed to Washington, D.C. next season, joining the NBA's Vancouver Grizzlies and the NHL's Quebec Nordiques and Winnipeg Jets in going south.

"We are going to create an environment where they can make money," George Zoffinger said. He insisted that bringing a



major league team to New Jersey would not come at the expense of state taxpayers.

"The people in Washington are going to pay \$30 million a year to have a baseball team," Zoffinger said, referring to the cost of a new stadium, the renovation of RFK Stadium and a sweetheart lease given to the owners of the former Montreal Expos. "That doesn't make any sense to me."

Much of the money needed to build a baseball stadium in New Jersey could be raised by leasing the rights to manage the Meadowlands Racetrack and Monmouth Park, tracks currently owned by the sports authority, Zoffinger said.

The NJSEA is hoping to get at least \$300 million through the long-term lease of those rights. Zoffinger confirmed a report in The Star-Ledger of Newark Thursday that state officials were interested in getting the Mets to move from Shea Stadium in New York City.

NJSEA wants baseball team
EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — While luring the New York Mets across the river is a long shot, the head of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority said Thursday that any major league baseball team moving to the state would thrive.

"We are going to create an environment where they can make money," George Zoffinger said. He insisted that bringing a

major league team to New Jersey would not come at the expense of state taxpayers.

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Zoffinger confirmed a report in The Star-Ledger of Newark Thursday that state officials were interested in getting the Mets to move from Shea Stadium in New York City.

"We're going to give them the first opportunity to take advantage," Zoffinger said. "If they don't, there has to be someone out there who would be interested in seeing the value of their team increase."

New York City and New Jersey have been vying for each other's franchises for decades. The NFL's Giants moved out of New York City in 1976 to play in the Meadowlands and the Jets followed in 1984.

The New Jersey Nets of the NBA were recently sold to developer Bruce Ratner, who plans to move them to Brooklyn.

There also is currently a push to build a stadium on the West Side of New York City for the Jets.

Mohr has strained tendon

SAN DIEGO — San Francisco Giants outfielder Dustan Mohr has a strained tendon in his left knee and is expected to miss the rest of the regular season.

Mohr was hurt Wednesday night when he caught Mark Loreto's sacrifice fly in left field and tripped over the mound in the Giants' bullpen down the right-field line, hyperextending his knee.

Woman star of 1950s dies

AVONDALE, Pa. — Gertrude Dunn, a pilot who played in a women's professional basketball league immortalized in the 1992 film "A League of Their Own," died in a plane crash at 72.

Dunn, also a member of the U.S. Field Hockey Hall of Fame, was at the controls of the single-engine plane when it crashed shortly after takeoff Wednesday from New Garden Airport, officials said.

In 1952, Dunn was voted rookie of the year after leading her team to the championship of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League. After the league folded in 1954, she attended West Chester University, where she played on the U.S. national field hockey and lacrosse teams.

SPORTS



Plummer won't challenge
NFL uniform rule with
Tillman tribute, Page 27

Taking command



Navy's Matt Hall (36), David Mahoney (40) and Jontavious Singleton (10) celebrate their 24-21 victory over Air Force with teammates at Falcon Stadium in Air Force Academy, Colo. on Thursday. Navy (5-0) can retain the Commander in Chief's Trophy with a victory over Army on Dec. 4.

Navy defeats Air Force, closes in on defending Trophy

BY JOHN MARSHALL

The Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Geoff Blumenfeld lined up for the game-winning kick, only to head back to the sideline because of a timeout. He trotted back out to the field again and — yep — another timeout.

Entering the game 0-for-the-season, Blumenfeld should have been nervous from the stalling tactic. He wasn't.

Blumenfeld picked a good time to make his first field goal, nailing a 30-yarder with 4 seconds left to lift Navy to a 24-21 victory over Air Force on Thursday night.

"What an opportunity," Blumenfeld said. "All year long we've talked about getting opportunities and taking the opportunities afforded you. Tonight was an opportunity."

Blumenfeld's kick has given Navy (5-0) a chance to do something it hasn't done since 1981:

win the Commander in Chief's Trophy in consecutive years. The Midshipmen ended Air Force's six-year run last year with a 28-25 victory and can repeat as service academy champion by beating Army on Dec. 4.

Air Force (2-3), on the other hand, is looking for ways to turn around what has so far been a disappointing season. After losses to California and Utah, both ranked teams, the Falcons are off to their worst start since opening the 1994 season 0-3.

"I still think we have a competitive football team," Air Force coach Fisher DeBerry said. "It'll be interesting to see how our team rebounds now after such a disappointing loss."

The matchup between two of the nation's top rushing teams was decided by a couple of key passes down the stretch — and one big kick by Blumenfeld.

Air Force, eighth in the nation with 278 yards rushing per game,

managed just 182 against the Midshipmen before turning to the air. Shaun Carney, who was replaced by Adam Fitch in the third quarter, returned to hit J.P. Waller on a 38-yard pass between two defenders and Alec Messerall on a 10-yarder to Navy's 19. Carney, who finished with 221 yards, hit Darnell Stephens for a touchdown on the next play, then ran in for the 2-point conversion to tie the game at 14-14.

"When I came back, it was like 'it's time to roll or we're not going to win,'" said Carney, who went 17-for-21 with two touchdowns and two interceptions. "Everybody on offense had to step up and that's just what we did."

It just wasn't enough. Navy, which had 22 total yards and no first downs in the third quarter, countered with a 66-yard pass from Aaron Polanco to Marco Nelson on a third-and-2. That set up Kyle Eckel's 3-yard touchdown run on the option right.

SEE NAVY ON PAGE 25



Navy quarterback Aaron Polanco breaks through a hole against Air Force during the second quarter on Thursday.



Els surges into
lead in American
Express
Championship

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Crosby homer sets
up A's weekend
showdown with
Angels

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Auburn,
Tennessee face
off in battle of
SEC unbeaten

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